

ABSTRACT

Title of Document: **THE DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF ALTERNATIVE TEACHER PREPARATION PROGRAMS IN MARYLAND: A CROSS-CASE STUDY OF MONTGOMERY AND PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

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Alternative teacher certification programs have become a prominent policy option to address teacher quality issues. Despite recent headway in the analysis of alternative teacher preparation graduates and programs (e.g., Weschler, et al., 2009; Boyd, et al., 2007), the literature has been plagued by incomplete program descriptions, limited research on policies, and the contextual factors that influence program development and implementation. The purpose of this study is to address the gaps in the literature by considering how two Maryland school districts translated state alternative teacher preparation policies into programs between 1999 and 2008.

Using a cross-case study of the two school districts, this research seeks to understand how local, state, and national factors influence the development and implementation of alternative teacher preparation programs and policies.

Since the current literature base does not contain an integrated framework to systematically describe alternative preparation programs and concurrently consider the influence of the multiple levels of the policy context, I created two orienting frameworks. This study contains two district case studies that consider the development and implementation of alternative teacher preparation policies and programs within each district and then a cross-case analysis that examines the patterns of development and implementation of policies and programs across districts.

This study finds that (1) the *No Child Left Behind* policy, Maryland's alternative preparation policy requirements, and each district's experience within the teacher labor market influenced the prevalence and development of programs in each district; (2) the districts' approaches to and work with providers reflected the debate and division in the national teacher education debate and the perceived "quality" of types of alternative preparation; (3) the majority of program training components, program theories of action, and implementation adjustments were not shaped by districts factors, but through Maryland's alternative preparation policy requirements and the individual provider; and (4) the contextual conditions of the districts' situation within the broader policy environment set each district up to pay closer attention to aspects of program development and implementation over others. The study closes by proposing refinements to the study's conceptual frameworks and

discusses the use of contextualized teacher education research to consider teacher education program quality.

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Chapter One: Introduction

Over the last thirty years, the teacher education policy environment has become increasingly receptive to alternatives to the more “traditional” four- and five-year teacher education programs. Alternative teacher certification programs (also called alternative teacher preparation programs) have become a prominent policy tool in the teacher education landscape to affect teacher supply and/or quality issues. These alternatives to the “traditional” teacher education programs include post-baccalaureate graduate, not-for-profit, for-profit, and district-run certification programs that vary greatly in structure, content and rigor.

The federal reauthorization of the *Elementary and Secondary Act* as the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* (NCLB) held school districts accountable for teacher quality and elevated the policy relevance of alternative teacher preparation to a national level. NCLB mandated that every child be taught by a “highly qualified” teacher by the 2005-2006 school year; NCLB defined “highly qualified” teachers as those who earned a bachelor’s degree in any subject, obtained state certification and taught in the subject of their certification. Under the federal law, individuals with a bachelor’s degree who demonstrated subject area proficiency and enrolled in an alternative certification program could be considered “highly qualified” while pursuing standard state certification. If districts failed to meet NCLB requirements, state and district federal funding could be at risk. Recognizing this pressing need to find “highly qualified” teachers, states began to introduce or utilize more alternative teacher preparation policies. The number of programs skyrocketed (Feistrizzer & Haar, 2007; Honowar, 2007a;) without a solid research base to consult to design and implement these programs.

Despite recent headway in the analysis of alternative teacher preparation graduates and programs (e.g., Boyd, Grossman, Lankford, Loeb, & Wyckoff, 2006b; Humphrey, Weschler, & Hough, 2008), the alternative preparation literature has been plagued with incomplete program descriptions and a lack of specific research on alternative preparation policies. In part, these deficiencies may be attributed to the complexities in studying alternative preparation that go beyond variance in forms and features.

The teacher education community's polarized views about the value, essential components, and rigor of teacher education permeate the literature on teacher education and characterizations of teacher education policies, programs and research (e.g., Cochran-Smith & Fries, 2001). "Deregulators," who assert that the requirements for teaching entry should be reduced and teacher education schools should be dismantled to break up their monopoly of the teacher education industry, argue that alternative programs could help alleviate teacher shortages, attract nontraditional candidates to teaching and increase the overall quality of teachers by relying more on content coursework preparation rather than teacher preparation programs. "Professionalizers," who promote the professionalization of teaching and teacher education through standards representing the knowledge, skills and dispositions that they consider to be essential to practice, typically find alternative preparation programs counterproductive to their purpose. They contend that teacher candidates need the opportunity to develop teaching skills through the integration of practice teaching and pedagogical classes prior to becoming the teacher-of-record. Lasley, Siedentop, and Yinger (2006) suggest that the current teacher education literature is missing "systematic evidence to support [that] the approaches being advocated...are

appropriate for achieving defined social and educational goals...there is some evidence to support the different positions, but it is spotty at best, flawed at worst, and often grounded on ideology” (p.14). The lack of consistently reliable research findings on the nature and impact of teacher education programs in general and alternative certification programs in particular contributes to an ideology-based rather than an evidence-based debate on the appropriate form of teacher education (e.g., Glazerman, Mayer, & Decker, 2006; Walsh, 2001, 2007).

Constructs such as traditional preparation, traditional certification, alternative preparation, and alternative certification do not have fixed definitions. Educators/scholars use them differently depending on the context under consideration and the perspective employed. For example, despite vast differences in the training and internship structures for candidates, researchers typically define “traditional” teacher education as any four- or five-year bachelor’s degree program that educates teachers on a college or university campus. According to the American Association of College of Teacher Education (AACTE), alternative certification is “any significant departure from the traditional undergraduate route through teacher education programs in universities and colleges” (AACTE, 1985, p. 12), but researchers use the “alternative certification” label to describe two-year post-baccalaureate programs, district-run programs, on-line programs, not-for-profit programs, and college/university-based programs.

The wide variety of programs included under this alternative certification umbrella creates difficulties for researchers and practitioners when they try to describe, characterize and compare alternative programs’ components, governance, and quality (e.g., Humphrey, Wechsler, & Hough, 2008). Alternative programs are often lumped

together in studies that examine the impact of alternative versus traditional teachers or alternative versus traditional pathways (e.g., Goldhaber & Brewer, 2000), but that research does not necessarily recognize the vast differences in the structures, content and rigor of programs. In a recent study considering the characteristics of an “effective alternative preparation program,” Humphrey & Wechler (2007, 2008) conclude that focusing research at the program level may not reveal much insight because individuals’ success or failure in the program and as a teacher depend upon how their past experiences interacted with program components and the school context. Scholars are still negotiating how to consider not only alternative teacher preparation program quality, but also teacher education pathways writ large (Darling-Hammond, Chung Wei, & Johnson, 2009). These terminology issues, as well as the ideological nature of the debates surrounding teacher education programs, complicate the development of clear program descriptions and analyses.

This dissertation utilizes the Maryland State Department of Education’s (MSDE) definition of alternative teacher preparation programs. Alternative preparation programs are post-baccalaureate teacher certification programs which “...lead to teacher certification, but not necessarily to a degree,” provide an abbreviated training program prior to beginning work as the teacher-of-record, and provide school-year, on-the-job training for a minimum of one school year (Retrieved on 7/24/2010 from http://www.marylandpublicschools.org/MSDE/divisions/certification/progapproval/maap_p_10_07.htm).

Alternative preparation programs may operate across multiple organizational units (district-run, state-run, external organization, college/university) as well as multiple

policy levels (local, state and federal) (Johnson, Birkeland, & Peske, 2005). The involvement of multiple organizations and stakeholders, as well as levels of government, makes it difficult to know who has regulatory powers and whose edicts are actually being followed. The interaction of these multiple stakeholders and policy levels yields a confusing “primordial soup” (Kingdon, 2003) of potential policies and programs. Resulting alternative preparation policies and programs are a blending of these different stakeholders’ interests and policy contexts. Most of the alternative preparation literature, however, does not take these contextual factors into consideration when describing or analyzing the purposes of and features of these programs.

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this dissertation is to address these deficiencies in the alternative preparation literature by considering how two Maryland school districts translated state alternative teacher preparation policies into programs between 1999 and 2008. Using a cross-case study of two school districts, this research seeks to understand how local factors interact with national and state factors to influence the development and implementation of alternative teacher preparation programs and policies.

The following question guided this study:

How do local district policy contexts interact with state and national policy contexts to shape the development and implementation of alternative preparation programs?

To answer this overarching study question, each district case study answered three questions.

1. What are the key features of alternative preparation programs?

2. What local factors shaped these programs' prevalence, development, and implementation?
3. How do those local factors interact with state and national factors to account for the design and implementation of these programs?

The cross-case analysis of the two districts then considered the following two questions.

1. How are program features similar and different across districts?
2. How do local, state, and national factors account for these similarities and differences?

Conceptual Framework

In order to carry out this study, I created two conceptual tools. First, utilizing the teacher education, alternative teacher preparation and teacher quality literature, I developed a program level descriptive framework in order to systematically describe and analyze program features and their implementation in each district. Although a few scholars have proposed frameworks to describe alternative preparation programs (e.g., Bliss, 1990; Darling-Hammond, 1990; Dill, 1994; Hawley, 1990; Zeichner & Schulte, 2001; Zumalt 1991), their resulting descriptions are often incomplete chronologies of program development rather than analytic descriptions of alternative teacher preparation program features. This study's systematic description of each program along key program components allowed for an analysis of alternative preparation programs within and across the cases.

Second, utilizing the teacher quality and the district policy implementation literature, I developed a district-level framework to uncover the local factors that interact with the national and state factors which may shape the design and implementation of

alternative preparation programs. Generally speaking, the available literature-based program frameworks do not take into consideration the influence of national, state and local policy contexts on program features which are increasingly important to consider in a high accountability policy context. The policy implementation literature, however, does suggest some sensitizing categories that may influence district policy design and implementation. This dissertation's district framework provided a starting place to consider which factors may be important in program design and implementation, but also allowed for other potential factors to emerge from the data.

In sum, the literature does not satisfactorily unpack the concept of "context" in policy implementation. Researchers recognize the importance of context and "that generalizations framed at high levels of abstraction conceal important differences, nuances and challenges" (Sykes, O'Day, & Ford, 2009, p. 775). Despite this recognition, most of the alternative preparation research does not systematically consider contextual factors which impact district policy design and implementation. In order to unpack the influence of context on the design and implementation of alternative teacher preparation programs, this dissertation's frameworks consider program features and the federal, state and district policy contexts to yield more systematic descriptions and analyses of alternative preparation programs as well as the district factors and broader policy factors that influence their development and implementation.

Study Contributions

This research adds to the field in a number of ways. First, this study contributes to the literature base by proposing two heuristics to describe and analyze alternative preparation programs and to consider how local policy contexts interact with the broader

policy environment to shape alternative preparation program development and implementation. Systematically considering key program features and the factors which shape the design and implementation of programs allows for a deeper understanding of alternative teacher preparation program design and implementation.

Second, this study considers the district forces involved in alternative teacher program development and implementation. Although the district policy implementation literature does identify relevant factors in policy implementation (e.g., Elmore & Runey, 1997; Marsh, Kerr, Ikemoto, Darilek, Suttorp, Zimmer et al., 2005; Spillane & Thompson, 1997), the knowledge base is uneven in quality, limited in scope and rarely addresses the relationship between districts, initial teacher education and alternative teacher preparation. Although a few studies consider the impact of district and central office leaders' experiences and ideology on policy implementation at the school-level (e.g., Honig, 2003; Honig & Coburn, 2008), few consider other district factors which may be involved in district policy design and implementation of alternative preparation programs. This study's district framework utilizes factors identified through the general policy implementation and teacher quality literature in order to discern their potential influence on alternative programs.

Third, this research seeks to understand how different districts translate state alternative preparation policies into practice. The similarities and differences between districts located in the same state and federal policy contexts present a unique opportunity to consider how district factors may influence alternative preparation programs. How these forces interact in each district may provide some insight into how alternative teacher policy implementation evolves in different contexts. This study moves the

alternative teacher preparation and district policy implementation conversation forward by recognizing the limitations of the current research and accounting for the literature limitations in the proposed frameworks.

Chapter Two: Literature Review and Conceptual Framework

This chapter reviews the literature utilized to construct the conceptual framework for this study. In my review of the literature I found no integrated framework to systematically describe alternative preparation programs and concurrently consider the influence of the multiple levels of the policy context (local, state and federal). Therefore, I used the teacher quality, teacher education, alternative teacher preparation and policy implementation streams of literature to develop to orienting frameworks for this study. The first major section of this chapter reviews the teacher quality, teacher education and alternative preparation literature and proposes a program level analytic framework that can be used to describe and compare programs along key program features. The second major section of the chapter reviews the teacher quality and policy implementation literature and proposes an analytic framework for examining the relationship between the federal, state and local policy environments in the development and implementation of alternative preparation policies and programs.

Program Level Literature Review and Framework

The first half of this chapter unpacks the literature on alternative preparation by grounding it in the teacher quality and teacher education research. The first section defines teacher quality and considers how researchers measure teacher quality as well as teacher education programs' efforts to prepare quality teachers. The second section reviews the available traditional and alternative teacher education literature related to program training components. The third section synthesizes the findings of the

empirically-based alternative teacher preparation research. The fourth section considers the limitations of the alternative preparation literature. The last section proposes a program-level framework and reviews the literature for each category.

Teacher Quality and Teacher Education Research

The literature contains emerging consensus that teacher quality is an important determinant of student learning (Angus, 2001; Darling-Hammond, 2000, 2009; Hanushek, 2002; Sanders & Rivers, 1996); however, stakeholders have been “unable to reach consensus about what specific qualities and characteristics make a good teacher” (Rice, 2003, p. 1) and how these qualities may impact student learning. Federal and state teacher certification and quality laws assume that teachers are qualified if they meet minimum certification qualifications and use certification as a proxy for teacher quality. Under NCLB all states are free to define teacher quality as they wish. Consequently, an array of definitions has been attached to the term. The two most prevalent constructions of teacher quality in the literature are teacher quality defined by student achievement outcomes and teacher quality defined by teacher qualifications and credentials (Cochran-Smith & Fries, 2005).

In defining teacher quality through student achievement outcomes, scholars attempt to tie differences in student achievement to teachers and then make policy recommendations concerning the distribution and placement of teachers and students. In defining teacher quality as teacher qualifications, scholars attempt to identify the specific teacher characteristics that may impact student achievement so that policy recommendations and program offerings can promote the development of these characteristics (Cochran-Smith & Fries, 2005). Teacher education research primarily

focuses on the second construction, teacher qualifications, and the impact teacher education may be able to have on teacher characteristics. Research focuses on these issues in part due to the difficulty in gaining access to student achievement data and setting up comparison studies (Cohen-Vogel & Smith, 2007). Very little research constructs a link between student learning, teacher characteristic or qualifications, teacher education, and teacher quality (Wilson, Floden, & Ferrini-Mundy, 2001). Most researchers recognize that using student achievement scores as a mechanism to measure actual student learning may be imperfect, but since better ways to measure learning and consequently teacher quality are yet to be developed or to become cost efficient. Student achievement scores are currently the most widely used construction in the literature (Rice, 2003; Zeichner & Conklin, 2005).

When considering research on teacher quality and teacher education, the teacher and the teacher education program are the two prevalent levels of analysis. Research evaluating teacher quality may be extended to provide commentary about program effectiveness, but these commentaries do not always consider the interaction of contextual variables needed for a thorough analysis of programs. Teacher education is only one factor shaping teacher quality. Researchers have not been able to determine how important it may be to either student achievement or teacher quality. The following paragraphs describe various methods that have been used to determine the quality of teacher education programs and candidates and identify methodological challenges associated with these measurement approaches.

One way researchers gauge teacher education program effectiveness is by asking for principals and teacher education program supervisors' perceptions of the quality of

the pre-service program and/or practicing teachers. Some studies ask principals to rate and compare graduates from traditional and alternative programs (Jelmberg, 1996). Other programs ask program supervisors to give their perceptions of program teachers (Bliss, 1990). However, the use of these perception checks is problematic. First, many individuals asked about the quality of alternative preparation candidates have some sort of stake in the program and may not be without bias in their answers (Zeichner & Schulte, 2001). Second, the aggregate rating of programs over several years is inconsistent because as programs and the quality of candidates within them fluctuate; in short, the relative “quality” of the pre-service program or teacher varies greatly (Johnson et al., 2005). Most current researchers agree that these perception checks may be important for programmatic improvements, but they are not a rigorous or dependable indicator of teacher effectiveness.

Another mechanism for identifying program effectiveness is asking teachers to assess their teaching skills and their teacher preparation programs. Many colleges and universities use alumni surveys to ascertain this information for accreditation purposes. Researchers ask graduates questions about their preparation program and coursework as well as their “beliefs about particular aspects of teaching in general or in relation to specific hypothetical situations presented to them” (Zeichner & Conklin, 2005, p. 649). Again these survey results may be important for program improvement, but the survey results from the same teacher appear to change over time; the further teachers were from their initial teacher preparation the less they were able to make connections between program content and teacher practice (Nutter & Zhang, 2007). The limitations of self-

reports and the mixed results do not allow scholars to say much about the relationship between teacher education and teacher quality.

A third way of ascertaining teacher quality is through teacher observations. For example, in the Stanford Teacher Education Program described by Darling-Hammond (2006), program leaders designed a rubric for supervisors to use when they observed student teachers. The observation tool incorporated the California Standards for the Teaching Profession and included areas that program faculty deemed important. The program found the systematic observational tool very helpful to evaluate students and their teaching as well as to inform program decisions. In order for this method to be consistently and objectively utilized by different evaluators the process requires some training, instrument norming, and time commitment. But, systematically acquired teacher observations may be useful for both teacher evaluation and program improvement.

Some research analyzes teacher certification test scores (e.g., ETS Praxis tests) to determine teacher quality. Researchers have tried to compare the test scores of alternatively prepared teachers and traditionally prepared teachers but the results are varied (e.g., Boyd et al., 2006a; Hawk & Schmidt, 1989). Using teacher test scores as a teacher quality indicator may be problematic; many of these tests focus only on content knowledge. Other research finds that even if teachers know their subject, they may not be able to communicate effectively that knowledge to their students (Grossman, 1989; Stoddart & Floden, 1996). For example, McDiarmid and Wilson (1991) find that mathematics majors in alternative route programs fail to exhibit the deep understanding of content necessary for reform-oriented teaching.

The use of student standardized test scores also has become an indicator of teacher quality. In recent years, “value-added” modeling has become a prominent tool to link individual teacher performance to student performance. In theory this type of statistical analysis allows researchers to ascertain the effect of a specific teacher on the achievement of a group of students’ achievement. Recent research in Louisiana and Ohio also attempts to use value-added modeling to determine the quality of teacher education programs by linking state student achievement test scores and state teacher preparation programs (Lasley et al., 2006; Noell & Burns, 2006). Boyd, Grossman, Lankford, Loeb, & Wyckoff (2009) compare 31 teacher preparation programs in New York employing a value-added analysis. Critics of value-added modeling raise concerns over what statistical methods will be used to model the data and what non-achievement variables should be used to ascertain these effects (Noell & Burns, 2006). Lasley et al., (2006) state that the value-added modeling assumes “teaching variables outweigh student socioeconomic status in terms of student achievement” (p.15). Value-added research also may attribute learning that takes place outside of the classroom to the classroom teacher. Again, however imperfect, the use of student achievement data to determine teacher and teacher education program quality appears to be the direction of education policy and teacher quality research. The teacher quality and teacher education research bases have expanded exponentially in the last twenty years. As the research focus has changed from constructing teacher education as a training problem (process-product) or as a learning problem (understanding teacher knowledge development) to a policy problem (Cochran-Smith & Fries, 2005), researchers from multiple disciplines have become involved and more nuanced approaches for study have emerged.

Components of “Good” Teacher Education Programs

As described above, few studies have been able to connect teacher quality to teacher education. In her meta-analysis of the teacher quality literature, Rice (2003) states:

Primarily qualitative in nature, the research of teacher education programs reveals mixed evidence regarding the degree to which these programs contribute to teachers’ knowledge. Several studies identify the specific components of teacher education programs that are most important (e.g., subject-specific pedagogy, classroom management). These studies offer limited evidence regarding the contribution of teacher education programs to teacher competencies or, more importantly, to student achievement. (p. 49)

Boyd et al. (2009) did find significant program differences in producing effective teachers as measured by student achievement, but they were unable to separate the effect of teacher selection from teacher preparation.

Taken holistically, neither traditional nor alternative teacher education research shows a strong link that teacher education programs contribute to teacher quality, even though different sides of the teacher education debate cite multiple studies to support their argument that one form of preparation is superior to the other (e.g., Allen, 2003; Angus, 2001; Kanstoromm & Finn, 1999; Walsh, 2001, 2007). Since advocacy-oriented think-tanks or foundations often fund these studies, the research community must consider the potential for bias. Conversely, teacher educators at colleges and universities also provoke fears of bias from those outside academia (e.g., Darling-Hammond, 2006). The lack of empirical, peer-reviewed evidence of a positive relationship between teacher education and teacher quality makes the defense of teacher education programs difficult.

Much of the pre-1980s research considered teacher behaviors and attitudes rather than the linkage between teacher learning and student achievement as indicators of

effectiveness. With an increased policy interest on student achievement and the teachers' role in fostering student learning, however, more research has emerged that seeks to address the relationship of teacher preparation to teacher effectiveness and student achievement. These studies, however, have not yielded definitive findings. This section describes teacher education program components by considering both traditional and alternative teacher preparation's inclusion of coursework on subject matter, pedagogy, field experiences, and education foundations (e.g., philosophy of education, history of education) in order to consider what components researchers have found to be included in "good" teacher education programs.

i. subject matter classes.

Across the country, the amount of time traditional teacher candidates spend in education and content specific classes varies widely and seems to depend largely on program mission and state policy. As an example, the University of Maryland undergraduate degree in education requires secondary traditional teacher education students to double major in their content area and education. Elementary education majors who earn an undergraduate degree in education are required to meet university liberal arts requirements (Retrieved May 23, 2009, from www.education.umd.edu). In many alternative preparation programs, candidates typically are not admitted into the program without an undergraduate degree in their subject area; consequently, these programs spend little time on subject matter concepts and ideas (Zeichner & Schulte, 2001).

In their review of teacher education literature, Ashton and Crocker (1987) found moderate support that a strong content background is a factor in teacher effectiveness.

Monk (1994) found that math coursework completion correlated with greater math teacher effectiveness. He also found a ceiling effect of 5 courses beyond which evidence of increased effectiveness was not evident. In his review of the literature, Allen (2003) agreed with Ashton and Crocker (1987) and stated that we do not have enough “fine-grained” research to “make clear how much subject-knowledge is important for teaching specific courses and grade levels” (p.1).

Several researchers have found a positive relationship between high school mathematics achievement and teacher certification in mathematics (Darling-Hammond, Holtzman, Gatlin, & Heilig, 2005; Goldhaber & Brewer, 2000; Monk, 1994; Monk & King, 1994; Rowan, Chiang, & Miller, 1997). Floden and Meniketti (2005) acknowledge that the literature supports the importance of a strong foundation in content for teachers; but, they also contend that a subject area major may not be enough content knowledge for everyone who wants to teach. They write,

[A content area degree] gave some prospective teachers a strong understanding of central concepts that support K-12 teaching, but left others with a weak command of their subject that remained at the level of memorized facts, rules, and principles, some of them inaccurate (p. 274).

Although teachers may possess the subject area qualifications, they may be unable to translate that subject matter knowledge into pedagogical methods that foster student learning.

Limited research considers an analysis of elementary teacher education and student achievement. The 2000 NAEP analysis found no relationship between 4th grade math scores and teacher certification (Whitehurst, 2003). In her review of the literature, Rice (2003) found that a teacher’s advanced subject-area education had a “diminishing return” on elementary student achievement; in some cases the more content courses

teachers took, the worse their students performed. So, although some evidence suggests that additional subject area coursework increases teacher quality, the effect on student achievement appears to vary depending on grade level and perhaps other factors such as pedagogical knowledge, content area, and skill.

ii. *pedagogy classes.*

Pedagogy or methods courses are designed to increase teachers' "pedagogical content knowledge" (Shulman, 1986). Teachers possessing pedagogical content knowledge understand not only the concepts and ideas of their content area, but also multiple ways to teach those concepts to students. Theoretically, teachers with pedagogical content knowledge are able to predict potential student misconceptions and devise ways to explain basic concepts so students can understand them. Depending on the prospective teacher's subject area, traditional teacher education programs typically include one or more general pedagogy courses. Prospective elementary teachers usually take one pedagogy course in every major content area. Some programs also integrate pedagogy classes and field experiences (including student teaching) to allow candidates to practice their pedagogy in controlled, supervised environments (Darling-Hammond, Chung, & Frelow, 2002).

In alternative teacher preparation, candidates do not always receive subject-specific pedagogical instruction. Many of these programs require a course in classroom management, curriculum and methods during the summer prior to the beginning of their teaching, but not all require additional pedagogical coursework during the subsequent school year (Zeichner & Schulte, 2001).

Several reviews of the literature point to the importance of pedagogical coursework in the preparation of teachers. Rice (2003) states, “Coursework in education methods, especially those that couple pedagogy with the subject matter (e.g., math education courses) is shown to have consistent positive effects [on student achievement] that often outweigh those of content coursework” (p.40). Allen (2003) also found research support for pedagogical preparation. Both reviews, however, note that it is unclear when, where, or how pedagogy should be taught in teacher education programs.

Wilson et al. (2001) state that studies about pedagogical practices demonstrate that the effect of teacher pedagogical knowledge and student achievement can not be determined. Clift and Brady (2005) posit, “it’s difficult to predict what impact a specific course or experience may have” on student achievement (p. 221). Although the studies suggest that pedagogical training is valuable, without a better understanding of the conditions under which quality pedagogical training occurs, it is difficult to evaluate the benefits and drawbacks of when, where, and how this training is offered. In their review of this literature, Clift and Brady (2005) found, “The majority of studies looked at how new teachers are socialized in the profession and how beliefs and actions changed (or resisted change) while engaged in methods courses and field experiences” (p. 324), but do not consider the relationship between pedagogy training and student achievement.

iii. field experiences.

Both traditionally and alternatively prepared teachers cite their student teaching as one of the most valuable experiences in their teacher education programs (Johnson & Birkeland, 2008). Traditional programs historically rely on student teaching as the capstone experience for teacher preparation. In recent years, many traditional programs

have coupled field experiences with pedagogy coursework. In this model candidates spend several hours a week at the university or college in coursework, and then spend several hours a week at a local public school observing classrooms and practice teaching (Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005). Some research finds that the integration of theory/practice and time for reflection are critical for building a coherent program that allows teachers to reflect on their own teaching and develop a professional attitude toward teaching (Darling-Hammond et al., 2002). Alternative teacher preparation programs typically include few field experience opportunities prior to candidates becoming the classroom teacher-of-record. Depending on the program design, students may participate in some kind of field experience prior to the beginning of the school year (summer school, etc.), but usually begin the school year with limited practical teaching experience.

Research suggests that field experiences may be important for effective teaching, but the results are inconclusive (Allen, 2003). Most studies of field experiences are qualitative and interpretive by design. They focus on teacher attitudes toward the program, students and teaching rather than relationships between field experience components and teacher effectiveness (Rice, 2003). The available research does suggest that teachers find the field work component useful in their transition into the teaching profession (Johnson & Birkeland, 2008), but the research has not ascertained whether or how this component impacts student achievement.

iv. education foundations classes.

Most traditional programs include education foundations coursework in child development, adolescent psychology, and the historical, philosophical, or socio-

contextual aspects of education. Alternative preparation programs vary greatly in terms of the type and number of foundations classes included (Zeichner & Schulte, 2001).

Very little research addresses the education foundations component, but recent literature reviews (Cochran-Smith & Zeichner, 2005) have included it. Although some research states that “greater preparation in child development, learning theory, curriculum development, and teaching methods has a stronger influence on teacher effectiveness than additional subject matter preparation” (Darling-Hammond, 1990, p. 136), it provides little insight into the impact of these courses on teacher knowledge. In their review of the literature, Floden and Meniketti (2005) only found five studies that examined the effects of individual courses on the impact of education foundation courses on teacher knowledge. The authors state that,

Overall the little research conducted on the effects of foundations courses on teachers’ knowledge has shown the potential of particular instructional modules or methods, rather than give any insight into what prospective teachers typically learn from such courses (p. 282).

Summary. In general, the research about the critical teacher education training components that produce “effective” teachers is mixed and inconclusive. Part of the inconsistent results may be attributed to the complicated, and often impossible, task of defining teacher effectiveness and isolating the impact of specific teacher education program components on teacher effectiveness. Despite the complications, dueling assumptions and arguments that equate opinions with facts fill the teacher education debate. Lacking a solid, empirical research base to define quality teacher education programs along multiple measures, alternative teacher preparation and traditional teacher education programs are pitted against one another in competition over scarce resources, reigning ideology and prospective candidates.

Alternative Teacher Preparation Research Findings

Scholars attempting to synthesize the alternative preparation literature have been able to conclude very little because “Research about its impact is limited and has produced decidedly mixed results” (Wilson et al., 2001, p. 26). The available literature primarily falls into two categories: (i) research that characterizes alternative programs and (ii) research that examines the effectiveness of alternative programs on student learning and dimensions of interest, namely teacher supply or retention. Due to the ideological nature of the manuscripts promoting one type of program over another, this review of literature only includes publications found in peer-reviewed journals or books.

Research that characterizes alternative programs.

Alternative teacher preparation research typically characterizes programs by describing one or more programs along specific dimensions or by considering other general alternative preparation purposes and issues. For example, Zumwalt (1991) examines alternate programs in Los Angeles, New Jersey, and Connecticut by comparing their similarities and differences, as well as their state policy contexts. She states that society should not view alternate programs as a substitute or competitor for traditional teacher education, but as a “context-specific experiment” (p. 92). She proffers that alternate programs “need to be judged in terms of their different goals and contexts as well as their impact on students and the profession of teaching” (p.92) because of the vast contextual differences that shape these programs. Zumwalt’s research considers the relationship between the state policy context and program differences along specific dimensions, but she does not consider the potential effect of local level factors in program development and implementation.

Humphrey and Wechsler (2007; Humphrey et al., 2008) completed seven case studies of alternative programs to better understand who participates in alternative preparation programs and the learning opportunities afforded them. The researchers found a great deal of variation “between and within” alternative certification programs and recommend that rather than comparing and analyzing programs, researchers should consider an individual’s past experiences as they interact with program components and the school context in order to evaluate program effectiveness. Their analysis finds considerable variance in how individuals experience program implementation; the teacher’s assigned school context largely determined the teacher’s experience in the classroom and how they experienced program components. Their analysis does not address the state or district policy contexts and their impact on program implementation.

In their review of the literature, Wilson et al. (2001) observed that alternative preparation programs were resource and labor intensive, even though they may appear as an easy alternative to traditional programs. Johnson et al. (2005) found that alternative preparation programs caused unexpected demands on the organizational capacity of the sponsoring entity; due to unexpected organizational constraints (e.g. fiscal, state policy), programs were unable to provide all the components and services initially promised. Consequently, programs had to reduce their original goals which affected program outcomes and, in some cases, the quality of preparation. Sponsoring organizations sometimes linked with institutions of higher education (IHE) to enhance their capacity to operate programs (Johnson et al., 2005). Although Johnson et al. (2005) did consider the development of key program features, they did not consider the influence of district, state, or federal policies on initial program design.

The available research characterizing alternative programs generally includes single or comparative case studies along specific dimensions of interest, but none of the reviewed studies consider program features within the corresponding federal, state and local policy constraints. Understanding the research challenges as well as the available findings provides the background knowledge to examine the relationship between teacher effectiveness and alternative teacher preparation.

Research that examines the impact of alternative preparation.

As stated in earlier sections, determining program quality has multiple methodological challenges. Even though researchers recognize these issues, including problems with using standardized exams as the sole measure of student achievement, they use student achievement as a common indicator in assessing the impact of teacher education. Researchers have used student achievement scores to compare alternatively and traditionally prepared teachers and by extension their teacher education programs. For example, in comparing New York City teachers who completed a university-based teacher education program, Boyd et al. (2006b) found that teachers with “reduced coursework prior to entry often provide smaller initial gains [on student achievement tests] in both mathematics and English language arts” (p.176). However, most of these differences disappeared over a few years. The researchers found that, “The variation in effectiveness within pathways is far greater than the average differences between pathways” (p. 176). These findings suggest that alternatively and traditionally prepared teachers may be able to produce similar student achievement eventually. Although the researchers did find a relationship between teacher education coursework and student

achievement, they were unable to isolate the relationship between individual courses or experiences and student achievement.

Some research examines the general effectiveness of alternative programs as related to other policy goals and outcomes. For example, Hawley (1990) systematically examined the various proposed purposes for alternative preparation. He states, “How one judges the consequences of alternative certification depends...on the purposes attributed to alternative certification by its advocates, and these differ widely from state to state” (p.6). Hawley identifies ten questions/justifications used by alternative preparation proponents and addresses each question¹. He acknowledges that the lack of empirical evidence and methodological problems associated with the alternative preparation literature make it difficult to make claims about the nature or quality of alternative teacher preparation or program effectiveness.

Zeichner and Schulte (2001) characterized alternative preparation programs based on peer-reviewed articles that distinguish between different types of alternative programs. In their analysis of 21 articles about 13 different programs, Zeichner and Schulte group programs by specific governance units or types of providers: state, urban school districts, and universities. They then describe the alternative preparation literature by explaining what is known about “what kinds of teachers [alternative programs] bring into

¹ Hawley’s (1990) questions include: 1. Can AC (alternative certification) substantially reduce the use of temporary certificates as a strategy for addressing teacher shortages? 2. Do AC programs attract people that would otherwise not be teachers? 3. Does AC serve as a more effective mechanism for screening out prospective teachers than do TC (traditional certification) programs? 4. Retention of teachers in AC programs versus TC programs? 5. How do AC and TC teachers differ with respect to the lessons about teaching they are taught? 6. How effective are TC teachers differ with respect to the lessons about teaching they are taught? 7. What effects do AC programs have on TC programs? 8. What effects do AC programs have on the participating schools and districts' commitment to and support of the continuing professional development of teachers? 9. What are the relative financial costs of AC to taxpayers and to teacher candidates? 10. What effects do AC programs have on the professionalization of teaching?

teaching...where these teachers teach and how long they stay, how well they teach, and how well they promote student learning” (p.268). The researchers found that alternative preparation programs seemed to attract more ethnically diverse individuals who taught primarily in urban areas. In their review, they found mixed and inconclusive evidence about the impact of alternative preparation on teacher retention. Zeichner and Schulte (2001) state that, “Hawley’s (1990) detailed criticism of research in this area more than a decade ago largely still holds up today” (p. 278). Small sample sizes, program evaluations administrated by program stakeholders, and the assessment of lower level teaching skills continue to constrain researchers’ ability to draw definitive conclusions about fundamental features or effects of alternate programs.

One purported purpose of alternative preparation is to open the teaching field to different types of teacher candidates and to focus on recruiting individuals who are unlike those typically enrolled in teacher education programs (Ballou, 1998; Chin, Young, & Floyd, 2004; Shen, 1997). Chin et al. (2004) found that alternative teacher candidates are slightly older and come from groups typically underrepresented in traditional programs. Hawley (1990) found that higher proportions of males, people over 25, minorities, and people who majored in math, science, or foreign language participate in alternative programs. Humphrey and Wechsler (2007) found that alternative programs attract both younger and older individuals, that some programs were slightly more successful at attracting men, and that “a more accurate description of the racial diversity...would be that they generally reflect the demographic composition of the local labor markets where they teach” (p.497). Cohen-Vogel and Smith’s (2007) findings from an analysis of the 1999-2000 National Schools and Staffing Survey suggest that alternative certification

candidates are not substantially different from traditional certification candidates. Based on this myriad of findings, the empirical research does not uniformly support the claim that alternative preparation attracts a different pool of people into the profession (Hammerness & Reininger, 2008).

Proponents also claimed that alternative preparation was to attract the “best and the brightest”² (Paige, 2002) into teaching. Wilson et al.’s (2001) review of the literature found that “alternative routes that have high standards for entry and require substantial pedagogical training, mentoring, and evaluation may be quite similar to traditional, college-based teacher education and tend to be successful in the production of qualified teachers” (p.11). Through alternative preparation the “best and the brightest”³ have strong opportunities to learn how to teach without going through a traditional program. Johnson et al. (2005) found most programs depended on their recruitment and selection processes to find high-quality program candidates; they did not rely on the quality of the program to ensure high quality teaching. Therefore, having the “best and the brightest” in the program helped make the program appear successful. Humphrey and Wechsler (2007) determined that a generalization about program recruitment and selection could not be made because the characteristics of program participants varied from program to program. Again, the mixed empirical evidence prevents sound generalizations about how

² Secretary of Education Robert Paige (2002) in the George W. Bush administration stated that alternative certification was a way to attract individuals into teaching by them not having to complete a traditional teacher education program. He argued that “states’ academic standards for teachers are low, whereas the barriers that keep out qualified prospective teachers who have not completed collegiate teacher preparation are high...we have found that rigorous research indicates that verbal ability and content knowledge are the most important attributes of highly qualified teachers. In addition, there is little evidence that education school coursework leads to improved student achievement.” Secretary Paige continued to say that alternative teacher preparation would serve as a mechanism to recruit the “best and brightest” into teaching because they would have high levels of content knowledge and it does not matter that they did not go through traditional teacher education.

³ Although the term “best and brightest” has been much used in discussions of alternative teacher preparation, the term may mean different things to different individuals. The assumption then is that this undefined group of the “best and brightest” want and would be able to teach.

and if alternative preparation programs attract the “best and the brightest” into the teaching profession.

Supporters of alternative programs claim that program participants would be more mature, while opponents claim that participants would not view teaching as a serious endeavor and may see it as a stepping stone to other career paths (Chin & Young, 2007; Friedrichsen, Lannin, Abell, Arbaugh, & Volkmann, 2008). Although Shen (1997) found in his review of the National Schools and Staffing Survey that alternatively prepared teachers state that they want to stay in teaching, other research indicates that the teacher turnover rates for these programs may be higher than the overall national average (Clewell & Villegas, 2001b; Johnson et al., 2005; Stoddart, 1990). Humphrey and Wechsler (2007) found that, “Although some participants indicated that they perceived teaching as an opportunity for career exploration, portraying all alternative certification teachers as individuals with only a superficial interest in the profession ignores the diversity of purposes among programs and participants” (p. 505). In their study of the New York City teacher labor market, Boyd et al. (2006b) found that although the attrition rate of alternatively prepared teachers was relatively high in the first few years, the remaining alternatively prepared teachers seemed to remain in teaching as long as traditionally prepared teachers. Ultimately, the research suggests that the vast differences in programs and contexts may make a difference in teacher retention but allows limited generalizations to be made across programs or contexts.

These scholars’ findings provide valuable information about specific aspects of alternative preparation (i.e., teacher retention). However, the research does not consider, or provide a framework to consider, program components or the multitude of interacting

and overlapping contextual forces that may be influencing the development and implementation of alternative programs.

Alternative Teacher Preparation Literature Methodology

The alternative teacher preparation literature findings begin to provide limited understandings of the development and implementation of programs along specific dimensions; however valuable, the research is fraught with methodological difficulties. This section reviews these difficulties and defines how this study addresses them.

First, one of the most cited challenge with the alternative preparation and teacher education literature is terminology. The decisions about the purpose of teacher education largely depend on normative and philosophical perspectives; as with any discussion of education issues different ideological camps use education terms and ideas in different ways.

Much of teacher education literature describes programs as either “traditional” or “alternative.” Researchers typically define traditional teacher education as any four- or five-year teacher education program that educates teachers on a college or university campus and culminates in an undergraduate degree. However, not all four- or five-year programs are created equal. Some programs exist almost exclusively on college campuses and offer teacher candidates limited involvement in public schools until their student teaching semester while other programs cultivate rich field experiences with neighboring schools so teacher candidates may integrate their pedagogical coursework and field experience opportunities. Some programs require candidates to complete a degree in their subject area while others award a degree in education. Despite these and other differences in program offerings, much of the research prior to 2006 categorizes all four- and five-

year programs as traditional teacher education (Zeichner & Conklin, 2005). For many, anything else is called “alternative” teacher education or “alternative certification.”

Darling-Hammond (1990) was one of the first researchers to distinguish alternative teacher education by using the terms “alternative routes” and “alternative certification.” According to Darling-Hammond, teacher candidates in an alternative route meet all state certification requirements and usually complete some variant of a graduate degree. On the other hand, candidates in alternative certification programs abide by altered state certification requirements like reduced credit hours. Darling-Hammond’s early delineation does not necessarily hold today because as Walsh and Jacobs (2007) noted, alternative certification programs have come “to imitate the very education programs...they were meant to replace” (p.34); in many cases, colleges and universities use the alternative certification label for their programs.

The vast difference in the structure and components of alternative programs, as well the wide variety of types of providers (college/university, district-run, external provider), however, make the “alternative” label just as problematic as the “traditional” label. In recent years teacher education leaders refer to the myriad of alternative teacher preparation programs as “pathways to teaching” rather than the more controversial alternative certification label (Grossman et al., 2008; Fesitrizer & Haar, 2007).

Alternative teacher preparation may be referred to as alternative certification, alternative preparation, alternative routes to certification, early-entry programs, or fast-track programs. For the purposes of this dissertation, all of these programs are referred to as alternative teacher preparation programs because that is Maryland’s name designation; Maryland programs must meet the same state and national standards as the traditional

teacher education programs, but state certification requirements allow for a reduced period for pre-employment and inservice training.

Second, the small number of study and program participants is another difficulty found in the alternative preparation research. As stated above, most of the alternative teacher preparation studies are qualitative in nature and consequently have a small number of participants. Bliss (1990) states that the numbers are too small to make broad generalizations about anything. Miller, McKenna, and McKenna (1998) also express concern about the representativeness of the small sample of teachers used for these studies. Shen (1997) used the National Schools and Staffing Survey to attempt to control for this statistical fact, but Ballou (1998) calls into question Shen's finding because this survey fails to effectively distinguish between different types and models of alternative preparation. In recent years some large scale, mixed methods studies in New York City (Boyd et al., 2006b; Kane, Rockoff, & Staiger, 2007) have been completed, but they have only been able to consider broad brush alternative and traditional preparation policy recommendations in regards to teacher retention and student achievement. For example, Kane et al. (2007) found the achievement scores of students taught by teachers prepared by both alternative and traditional preparation program were similar after three years. Given these findings the study authors discussed the benefits and drawbacks of hiring alternative versus traditionally prepared teachers. Their findings have made important contributions to the field, but more research will need to be completed to test their findings.

Third, some acknowledge that it is difficult to isolate program effects in any teacher education program, not just alternative ones. Good (2006) states that "proving

the relative effects of [alternatively certified or traditionally certified] on classroom practices is difficult because enacted practice also is influenced by a host of other variables” (p.414). Zeichner and Conklin (2005) state that research on teacher education “needs to be able to distinguish enrollment from learning effects and to distinguish learning effects within teacher education programs from the influence of the settings in which graduates teach” (p. 699); the current research cannot distinguish between the influence of teacher education programs on teacher learning and the influence of the school context on teacher learning. In their analysis of seven alternative preparation programs to determine the characteristics of effective programs, Humphrey and Wechsler (2007; Humphrey et al., 2008) question the utility of even trying to compare alternative programs because they found “teacher development in alternative certification to be a function of the interaction between the program as implemented, the school context in which participants are placed, and the participants’ background and previous teacher experiences” (Humphrey et al., 2008, p. 483). Therefore, even with specific information about program components, researchers are unable to isolate the interaction between individual candidates and school contexts to determine the influence of program components.

Fourth, comparing across alternative preparation state and program contexts is difficult in part because of a lack of specific research on alternative preparation policy and incomplete program descriptions. Zeichner and Conklin (2005) state that in order to identify any impact of program characteristics, the research must constitute a “close study of the characteristics teachers bring to their programs, of the complexities of programs as they are actually implemented, of what students learn from their programs, and of the

schools in which they teach” (p.697). Miller et al. (1998) state that most studies of alternative certification do not “systematically assess teacher performance” and when they do “they typically rely on measures that are required by the state or district” (p. 7). The conflicting or inconclusive findings of the literature provide little information about what should be included in programs, let alone general standards to evaluate these programs as a group (Johnson et al., 2005). However imperfect, the available research does offer some relevant findings and provides the basis for this dissertation’s program-level framework.

Program-Level Conceptual Framework

As demonstrated above, the emergent alternative preparation literature base is plagued with changing definitions, conflicting findings, and methodological issues, but also has applicable findings for this study. The review of the alternative teacher preparation literature indicated what scholars already know about alternative preparation programs and policies and identified gaps in the literature. A review of the teacher education literature augmented the alternative preparation findings and provided a stronger base from which to identify and articulate the key categories used to describe alternative preparation. The teacher quality literature informed the proposed program framework by identifying the relevant aspects of the state and federal policy contexts that shape alternative preparation and teacher education programs. In order to fully answer the research questions and systematically describe alternative programs, this study proposes a program-level analytic framework grounded in the teacher quality, teacher education and alternative preparation literatures and influenced by various scholars across disciplines.

The purpose of the following alternative preparation typology is to provide a way to systematically describe and analyze alternative preparation programs and concurrently consider important issues of the organization and policy context. This typology builds on the work of others (e.g., Hawley, 1990; Humphrey & Wechsler, 2007; Zeichner & Schulte, 2001) to develop a framework for describing the key components of alternative programs. Each category is further divided into subsections to describe the elements of importance within the category. This more comprehensive typology may foster a deeper understanding about the design and implementation of programs. The framework synthesizes the literature’s recommendations for “quality” teacher education, proposes other categories, and justifies their inclusion. The following table identifies descriptive categories that will serve as a framework to analyze the alternative programs implemented by districts in this study.

Table 1: Alternative Teacher Preparation Program Typology

A. Program Operation
<i>Program Location and History</i>
<i>Stakeholders and Roles</i>
<i>Organizational Unit and Oversight</i>
<i>Funding</i>
B. Entry Process
<i>Target population and Recruitment</i>
<i>Requirements and Selection Process</i>
C. Training Components
<i>Classes</i>
<i>Internship/Practica</i>
<i>Mentoring</i>
D. Implementation Adjustments
E. Theory of Action
F. Program Outcomes
<i>Attract and Retain Quality Candidates</i>
<i>Increase Student Achievement</i>

Program Operation

The Program Operation category includes elements relevant to understanding the day-to-day running of the program.

Program Location and History. The location and evolution of a particular program is a relevant category for program descriptions. Boyd, Grossman, Lankford, Loeb, and Wycoff (2006b) found that the majority of teachers teaching in New York State had grown up within 80 miles of New York City and attended teacher education programs located in New York City. Consequently, the location of an alternative program may affect the quantity and quality of the pool of individuals who may participate in these programs. Urban and rural school districts have to work harder to find teachers because most teacher education graduates want to teach in suburban schools (Stoddart & Floden, 1996). Many hard-to-staff districts find alternative preparation programs extremely attractive because they typically draw on local residents as a source of teachers for their classrooms.

The history of a program also may contribute to the pool of teachers districts can attract. The longer a program has been in existence the more time it has had to identify problems, correct them, develop a reputation, and attract quality candidates. For example, Connecticut has had a state-run alternative preparation program since the mid-1980s. Program administrators are arguably more adept at program operations and have had the opportunity to develop a positive reputation for preparing quality teachers (Bliss,

1990). With the current debate over alternative preparation program quality and its impact on student achievement, the location and evolution of programs may be an important descriptor.

Stakeholders and Roles. The partners and stakeholders of a program, as well as their established bureaucracies shape alternative preparation programs and their operations. Whether district-run or offered through an external provider, programs whose organizational structure must be created from scratch often require more time and money than programs operating from a previously functioning organizational structure. Johnson et al. (2005) found that alternative programs often require more resources and organizational support to operate than initially anticipated.

Programs may cope with this reality in different ways. In Johnson et al.'s (2005) study, district-run programs that partnered with other stakeholders like foundations or universities were able to absorb some of these organizational costs. Other programs sacrificed their initial vision to cope with the realities of program operation. For example, Johnson et al. (2005) found that teacher quality was sometimes controlled through the admissions process rather than the program's components and experiences.

Birkeland (2005) found that external providers (colleges/universities, private providers) also had program operation difficulties. These external providers did not necessarily have the capability to find district mentors and place teachers in internships. From her research, Birkeland recommends that programs operate as a partnership between the district and the external provider to alleviate some of these problems. With the exception of these two studies, the literature speaks very little about stakeholder

relationships and their effects on alternative preparation program operation and development.

In Maryland, state policy stipulates that a local school district must be involved in alternative preparation. A district may operate its own program without outside partnerships, but an external provider must be in partnership with a local school district to run a program. Understanding a program's stakeholders and their roles provides a glimpse into sources of support (financial or organizational) for alternative preparation programs.

Organizational Unit, Oversight, and Governance. Johnson et al. (2005) describe the governance of alternative preparation programs along a centralized to decentralized continuum. States that use a more centralized approach to alternative preparation purportedly monitor, control, and sometimes standardize their program operations. At the other end of the continuum are states, like Maryland, that choose a more decentralized approach to approve programs that meet basic criteria and then take a more "hands-off" approach during program implementation. In Maryland, the state designates components that must be included in programs (e.g., daily mentoring, number of training hours, literacy classes), but the way in which a program implements those components is largely a program decision. Since the state grants discretion to local school districts, the local forces shaping alternative programs may be more evident than in states that exert stronger controls.

State policy contexts (e.g., Connecticut) that utilize alternative preparation as a mechanism to increase the quality of teaching may have highly regulated state programs. The state controls the content and design of the program as well as its implementation

through the state office of education. These state programs may be structured as one single program (e.g., Connecticut) or as multiple programs offered across the state at regional centers (e.g., Georgia). Whatever the number of programs, the state is in direct control of the program curriculum as well as program implementation across the state. Individuals teaching in these programs may be state administrators, university professors, and/or district teachers (Zumwalt, 1991). Program curriculum is typically described as being very broad so that teachers may teach across the state in multiple contexts (Bliss, 1990).

Other states (e.g., Maryland) delegate more control of alternative preparation to the LEAs. States may retain general program approval responsibilities, but allow districts to design and implement their own programs (e.g., Texas). LEA operated alternative programs typically include a large number of district teachers as instructors. The curriculum focuses on district policies and procedures as well as the specific characteristics of students enrolled in these districts (Zumwalt, 1991).

Some Institutions of Higher Education (IHEs) have become involved in alternative preparation. Often post-baccalaureate, IHE programs vary in the amount and kind of field experiences they utilize. Instructors are almost exclusively university instructors although the IHE may hire individuals from local districts to teach courses. The curriculum typically mirrors that of traditional preparation programs but the sequence of courses and concepts may be altered (Wilson et al., 2001).

In some states, alternative teacher preparation is primarily a private provider domain. Programs such as *The New Teacher Project* (TNTP) or *Teach for America* (TFA) contract with a local school district to recruit and train teachers. Private provider

programs typically consist of an intense summer institute, a student teaching experience, and some school-year seminars subject to state certification requirements. Teachers begin as the teacher-of-record in the fall and receive varying degrees of programmatic support from the private provider or contracted IHE during the school year. Instructors may be local school district or IHE faculty; the program curriculum tends to include generic instruction encompassing concepts important for any beginning teacher.

Some states (e.g., Texas) allow private regional centers and/or on-line alternative programs to prepare teachers. These programs may be a very traditional teacher education curriculum delivered on-line with an internship at a local school, or, depending on the state regulations, a set number of credits offered to meet certification requirements. Increasingly, IHEs and private providers market themselves as a package to local LEAs. The organization promises to recruit, train, and supply a designated number of teachers if the LEA promises the teachers employment.

Other programs may be formed through a combination of organizational entities. For example, the Connecticut Department of Education partners with LEAs and IHEs to construct the curriculum and program design for their alternative program. In Baltimore, Maryland, *The New Teacher Project* partners with the local LEA, as well as IHEs, but must meet state program approval standards to be an approved provider.

The scholarly literature and on-line resources identify multiple governance forms that alternative programs may take. What organizational unit governs programs seems to depend on state certification requirements and the level of involvement a state may have in alternative preparation. It seems reasonable to hypothesize that where the governance

of a program resides will have implications for program design, operation, and implementation.

Funding. The funding of alternative preparation programs may make a difference in program operation and implementation. The funding source may have a say over program direction and components. For example, in recent years, the federal government has encouraged program development with federal Title II teacher quality grants and “Transition to Teaching” grants. These grant opportunities have fueled program development nation wide (Feistritzer & Haar, 2006b). Grant recipients are required not only to meet state and local guidelines for alternative teacher preparation, but also to report specific evaluative information about candidate knowledge (e.g., Praxis II scores) and their impact on student achievement just as IHEs must do as part of the *Higher Education Act of 1998*. Therefore with the prevalence of alternative preparation programs, districts and their partners have had to expand their traditional roles as educators of students to include educators of preservice teachers. These expanded roles require additional and creative funding sources (i.e. Transition to Teaching grants, Title II, Title I) and carry their own reporting and evaluating requirements.

Sometimes programs use financial incentives to lure their targeted population into programs. Johnson et al. (2005) found that incentive programs for specific target populations (e.g., mid-career changers or critical subject shortage areas) were critical to their participation. These financial incentives may provide candidates an easier transition into teaching from another job. Therefore, funding sources used as incentives may be important to increase the number of candidates participating in alternative programs.

Entry Process

The next category, Entry Process, includes items important to the recruitment, selection and entry of potential candidates.

Target Population and Recruitment. Another important category for analysis is an alternative preparation program's target population; who is the program trying to recruit into teaching? Some research has addressed this question through both large, quantitative analyses and small qualitative studies and found that individuals in alternative preparation are often older and more diverse. Many are career-changers and recent college graduates who, without alternative preparation, are less likely to become teachers (Shen, 1997). The types of individuals that programs target varies widely. Some programs (e.g., Teach for America) recruit individuals who have just graduated with their baccalaureate degrees, while other programs recruit from specific segments of the population like the military, retired math and science professionals, or paraprofessionals (Clewell & Villegas, 2001a).

The target population may affect the substance and structure of program components. For example, under the Resident Teacher Certificate (RTC), Maryland requires that candidates complete a 4-8 week teaching internship. The candidates' experiences teaching and/or working with children shape the length of their internship; the more experience in schools they have had, the fewer days they have to spend in an internship.

Many programs have specific recruitment tools to attract candidates. The New Teacher Project, for example, utilizes multiple recruitment strategies including "internet marketing, candidate cultivation, print advertising, community outreach, and specially trained teacher recruiters" (Retrieved May 3, 2009, from [http://www.tntp.org/ services/](http://www.tntp.org/services/)

teacher_recruitment.html#Recruitment). Teach for America relies heavily on campus-based individuals to promote goals and recruitment. A clearer understanding of a program's target population and recruitment techniques may make program goals and objectives clearer.

Requirements and Selection Process. An original purpose of alternative teacher preparation was to reduce state teacher certification requirements to allow individuals with subject matter degrees to become teachers without earning a second bachelor's degree (Walsh & Jacobs, 2007). Today, in alignment with NCLB's definition of alternative certification, all alternative programs require candidates to possess a bachelor's degree prior to program entry. Most programs also require candidates to meet a GPA requirement, pass a basic skills exam, participate in an interview process, and provide a writing sample (Feistritzer, 2006); but these requirements vary depending on state certification requirements and district preferences.

Some programs may admit everyone meeting minimum requirements while others may require additional screening measures. For example, Teach for America (TFA) reports selecting candidates who have met entry requirements, but then their candidates must complete a two-tiered selection process. First, TFA narrows the application pool and conducts phone interviews with candidates. Second, if candidates make it past the phone interview, they are invited to participate in a group interview, complete a written exercise, a problem solving exercise, a one-on-one interview, and to teach a sample lesson (Retrieved on 2/1/08, from www.teachforamerica.org). Although some programs have a lengthy selection process, the research does not discuss the relationship between this selection process and high standards for selection.

In their review of literature, Wilson et al., (2001) found that programs with high entry standards typically look very similar to traditional teacher education programs. Johnson et al. (2005) found that programs controlled the quality of teacher candidates through high entry standards. A program's entry and selection standards may provide a lens into program purposes and ultimately program outcomes.

Training Components

The Training Components category includes descriptions of classes, internship and mentoring of alternative programs. Without this operational knowledge, the program component descriptions would lack depth.

Much of the alternative preparation literature includes information describing program components but leaves out important operational details such as the length of the program, the number of candidates in a cohort, and the number of times per year a program is offered.

As earlier noted, at the heart of any teacher education debate is what content should be included in programs to produce "effective teachers." Teacher education programs include varying amounts of instruction in subject matter, pedagogy, teaching survival skills, and practice teaching. Scholars argue over the importance of the content, length, sequence, and role of these components (Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005; Zeichner & Conklin, 2005). Researchers have not been able to determine the most important components of teacher education or whether the order in which these components are introduced makes a difference in teacher learning (Cochran-Smith & Zeichner, 2005; Stoddart & Floden, 1996; Wilson et al., 2001). Some questions remain a matter of intense debate, including: Is it better to have a strong theoretical background

before entering the classroom or after, or at all? Is it easier to learn how to teach through practice teaching devoid of theoretical constructs? Is it better to learn subject matter concurrently with pedagogical content knowledge or separately? How does mentoring affect teacher learning? The general teacher education literature is unable to answer these questions consistently. Therefore, it is important for any analysis or description of teacher education programs, alternative or otherwise, to include rich descriptions of classes and seminars in pedagogy, educational foundations and theory, practical aspects (e.g., classroom management, gradebook keeping), and the amount and kind of practice teaching and mentoring, in order to have a clearer understanding of what teacher education, and in this instance, what alternative preparation involves. For the purposes of this study, this category has been divided to include information on classes, internships, and mentoring.

Classes. Many alternative programs include very little subject matter preparation because candidates already have a bachelor's degree in their content area. Historically, opponents of alternative preparation criticized the lack of pedagogical training. An original purpose of some alternative policies was to reduce the number of "education" courses in teacher education because those courses, presumably, didn't contribute to quality teaching (Kanstoromm & Finn, 1999). Some research, however, suggests that the lack of pedagogical training may actually hurt K-12 students. For example, in her analysis of alternatively prepared teachers, Grossman (1989) found that although teachers had a strong background in their subject as English majors, they had difficulty translating that knowledge to students. The lack of research on program impact and pedagogical training make it all that more important to provide descriptions of classes in order to

better understand the concepts taught in the program and to identify those that were not covered.

The limited research on district-run alternative preparation programs suggests that these programs typically focus on district policies and school district's curriculum (Stoddart & Floden, 1996; Zumwalt, 1991). They focus more on the “pragmatic aspects of teaching - what to do tomorrow and how to survive one's first year of teaching - more than on the theoretical or philosophical aspects of teaching and learning” (Stoddart & Floden, 1996, p. 92). Conversely, Steiner and Rozen (2004) found that traditional programs, including alternative preparation programs that look like traditional programs, tend to raise questions about the efficacy of district curriculum frameworks and state testing practices rather than prepare teachers to teach in a specific district. College and university-based teacher education programs' tendency to not incorporate these practical, classroom skills into courses has long been discussed in the literature (e.g., Conant, 1963), but these discussions are rarely empirically based; therefore ideological rhetoric often prevails.

Internship. In traditional programs, teacher candidates spend at least one semester practicing to be a teacher under the supervision of at least one person at the college or university and a school-based cooperating teacher. Many alternative programs have teachers serving as the teacher of record while they are learning how to teach. Simply put, practice teaching occurs on the job (Dill, 1994). In their discussion of “learning to teach by doing”, Stoddart and Floden (1996) show concern because, “practical teaching experience, in isolation from professional training, tends to socialize teacher candidates into the prevailing school culture, rather than expanding their

awareness of a range of different teaching practices” (p.95). As a result, alternatively prepared teachers may not expand their teaching repertoire. Some programs do have a summer school practice teaching requirement or internship to combat this concern. Some programs also offer hybrid experiences of teaching prior to full-time teaching. Research suggests that this practice may increase alternatively prepared teachers’ initial effectiveness in teaching (Boyd et al., 2006b) and potentially make them as effective as traditionally prepared teachers.

Mentoring. The amount and type of mentoring afforded teacher candidates vary greatly from program to program, but mentoring is often cited as an important program component for both traditional and alternative teacher preparation (Cochran-Smith & Zeichner, 2005). Some scholars see mentoring as the cornerstone for alternative preparation training, especially for those teachers who are “learning by doing.” Pituch and Miller (1999) found that with effective mentoring, alternatively prepared teachers’ students performed comparably to traditionally prepared teachers’ students. Humphrey et al. (2008) found mentoring critical to alternatively prepared teacher success, but mentoring quality was haphazard; mentors were often not deliberately chosen or trained to work with teachers so mentor impact, as perceived by teachers, varied. Unfortunately, the alternative preparation literature rarely describes and explains the mentoring component. Humphrey and Wechsler (2007) found that most alternative programs had little control over the quality or quantity of mentoring occurring in their programs even though mentoring may increase teacher effectiveness (Zientek, 2007). Overall, we know very little about how mentors may be chosen, trained, or held accountable in different programs. Researchers have identified conditions under which mentoring is a valuable

component of preparation (e.g., supportive school environment), but the quality of mentoring in alternative preparation may vary by context and type of program.

Implementation Adjustments

The Implementation Adjustments category describes the results of program implementation of the above program features – program operation, entry process and recruitment and training components. When policies and program plans meet the realities of the individual context, the resulting implemented program features may be different than was first intended. This category in the framework will identify these differences and potential challenges.

Theory of Action

A program's theory of action (Weiss, 1998) is the glue that, in theory, holds program features together; it drives program development and implementation. All alternative teacher preparation programs operate from a similar theory of action.

The idea behind alternative certification was straightforward: expedite entry into the public school classroom for well-educated individuals who were eager to teach but unwilling (or could not afford) to spend a great deal of time and money in education coursework, and strengthen the classroom support given to new teachers via mentoring and other induction activities. (Walsh, 2007, p. 17)

The major difference between programs is how they implement this broad vision within their program. The theory of action not only includes program goals, but also how program stakeholders expect to meet proposed goals and outcomes. Therefore, understanding stakeholders' intentions for program development and implementation is an important element for this typology. In addition, understanding how program components are expected to advance program goals is critical. All of the program features and corresponding categories interact and evolve with these expectations to impact program development and implementation.

Although a program or district may have a stated theory of action, as program development and implementation interacts with the policy contexts both desired outcomes and unintended consequences may result. Understanding a program's actual and later modified theory of action as determined by the implementation of program components reveals important information about the program and district policy context.

Program Outcomes

In the last fifteen years, the program outcomes of any teacher education program, traditional or alternative, have become increasingly important. As national and state policies demand information about the "quality" of teachers and their preparation, various measures have emerged. Teacher recruitment and retention and student achievement are especially prominent.

Attract and retain quality candidates. A program's success and track-record in attracting quality candidates may "make or break" the program's longevity in a district. Only a few studies discuss the retention of teachers who have completed alternative preparation programs. This research suggests that "alternatively certified teachers may be just as good as traditionally certified teachers...but they are more likely to leave teaching just when they are learning the ropes" (Kane et al., 2007, p. 65). If program graduates do not remain in teaching, the cost effectiveness of programs may be impacted; therefore retention should be included in program descriptions.

Increasing student achievement. As stated earlier, researchers have begun to try to assess the impact of individual teachers on student achievement (Boyd et al., 2006b; Kane et al., 2007; Sanders, Ashton, & Wright, 2005), but results appear to be somewhat problematic due to measurement concerns (Lasley et al., 2006). Very little, if any, of the

literature has been able to connect a teacher's pre-service training to student achievement. However, theoretical linkages may be made by better understanding the components of "quality teaching" that impact student achievement and the teacher education components that contribute to these quality teaching practices. With differences in the training module and inclusion of various training components, understanding and incorporating the appropriate teacher education components becomes critical; therefore, including this category in the framework is important.

Summary

The alternative teacher preparation and teacher education literature provide general understandings and descriptions of programs as well as the impetus for the programs. The program feature's portion of this study's conceptual framework builds on these understandings by providing systematic categories to guide data collection and program descriptions.

The current literature does not consider what factors may propel these programs and policies in different settings or how these factors impact the development and implementation alternative preparation programs and policies. The next section reviews the relevant policy implementation literature and the district-level portion of the conceptual framework.

District Policy Implementation Literature and Framework

The purpose of this section is review the relevant district policy implementation literature in order to propose factors that may shape alternative teacher preparation programs' development and implementation.

District Policy Implementation Literature

Prior to 1990, scholars sought data to describe districts and superintendents but paid little attention to the school district's role in policy implementation. As demonstrated in Chubb and Moe's (1990) seminal piece Politics, Markets, and America's Schools, many believed that districts impeded school improvement and should be eliminated. The role of the district in policy implementation was largely ignored.

In the mid- to late-1990s, however, scholars began to recognize the district as an important level of analysis (Elmore & Burney, 1997; Spillane & Thompson, 1997). This newer literature base suggests that districts affect policy design and implementation, but tends to focus on policy implementation at the school level; the district may be cited as an important player, but few unpack the factors involved in understanding how districts influence policy implementation (Barth, 1990; Fairman & Firestone, 2001; Grossman, Thompson, & Valencia, 2002; Honig, 2007; Honig & Coburn, 2008; Massell & Goertz, 2002; McLaughlin & Talbert, 2003, 2006; Spillane & Thompson, 1997).

To unpack how districts affect policy implementation, Hamann and Lane (2004) completed two case studies to see how state education agencies implemented NCLB policies at the local level. They found that states engage in a negotiation process with local agencies throughout policy implementation; in the current policy environment, school districts are a key player in implementation because they translate accountability policies to be implemented at the school level (e.g., Honig, 2006). Some recent research has begun to use organizational learning and socio-cultural theories to analyze how districts interpret and utilize data for policy implementation (Coburn & Talbert, 2006b; Honig, 2007; Honig & Coburn, 2008), but this method of analysis is a fairly recent phenomenon.

In general, the district policy implementation knowledge base is uneven; that is more information exists about some factors than others, but few studies focus on the role of the district in teacher preparation or alternative teacher preparation policy implementation. Given the increased accountability expectations through federal and state policies, “to an increasing degree [districts] now are called on to manage and lead the systematic improvement of instruction and its outcomes for students” (Sykes, O’Day, & Ford, 2009, p.767). Perhaps that is why the available literature focuses on districts involvement in student achievement and accountability and to a lesser degree on their involvement in teacher learning and education. The available literature, however, may provide some insight into the role of the district in policy interpretation in general, the translation of district policies into actions, and how unofficial policies may be just as powerful as formal ones (Malen, 2006). This limited literature review focuses on those findings that may translate into an analysis of district implementation of alternative teacher preparation policies. As a whole, studies relevant to the role or training of teachers find that the district may affect (a) teacher learning, (b) the amount or level of district support in policy implementation, and (c) how districts as organizations make implementation decisions.

Teacher Learning

In a retrospective view, Hightower (2002) found that many researchers have “negatively portrayed [district central offices] as ‘dysfunctional dinosaurs’...bureaucratic, intransigent, and beyond reform...” as units that impede school improvement and teacher learning rather than facilitate it (p.4). In recent years researchers have found, however, that the district may both positively or negatively affect

teacher learning through district policies. Barth (1990) discusses the importance of improving schools within the school building and the ineffectiveness of district professional development policies. He posits that how districts support teacher professional development matters for teacher learning:

When a school or school system deliberately sets out to foster new skills by committing everyone to required workshops, little happens except that everyone feels relieved, if not virtuous, that they have gone through the motions of doing their job. So, by and large, the district staff development activities we employ insult the capable and leave the incompetent untouched.(p.50)

Massell and Goertz (2002) found the views and values of the district leadership important in building instructional capacity and impacting teacher professional development. Although all of the leaders in the study cited the importance of teacher knowledge, “only a few demonstrated a deep commitment to professional learning as the linchpin of sustained improvement. These district leaders devoted not only resources but also creative energy to the task...” (p.45). In addition, two case studies found that districts in large-scale reforms were able to positively impact teacher learning through targeted professional development opportunities (Elmore & Burney, 1997; McLaughlin & Talbert, 2003). In other words, district leaders are able to impact teacher change through investments in teacher learning.

Another study considered the influence of district policy on new teachers’ understanding of teaching. Grossman et al. (2002) set out to examine districts’ and district policies’ role in beginning teachers’ lives. The researchers found that districts focused beginning teachers’ attention on some issues rather than others.

The tasks they [the district] assign to new teachers, the resources they provide, the learning environments they create, the assessments they design, and the conversations they provoke all have consequences for what first-year teachers

come to learn about teaching the language arts and about teaching more generally.
(p. 141)

Therefore, just as the other studies mentioned above indicate a relationship between district policy actions and teacher learning, in this study the district focused new teachers' attention on certain aspects of teaching (e.g., student compliance in the English classroom).

Other studies have found that districts may influence teacher knowledge, but are not as successful at influencing teacher pedagogy. Fairman and Firestone (2001) studied the district's role in implementation of state standards and assessments on teaching practice. They posit that state standards can influence districts to attend to certain aspects of teaching when those standards are supported by other policies. The researchers found that when a district did attempt to implement state standards, the district was more successful influencing the content of instruction than pedagogical practices; teachers may have updated their content knowledge, but their teaching practices may not have changed. In their analyses of curriculum policy implementation, Cohen (1990) and Spillane (2004) found that despite the district or state's best effort to affect teacher pedagogy, teachers' interpretation of the standards or policy may alter the policy's intended outcomes.

In sum, the district policy implementation literature suggests that district policies affect teacher learning, both positively and negatively, through various methods including professional development delivery and funding allocations. This research suggests that although a district may attempt to focus teacher learning in a specific direction (e.g., changing teacher practices through adherence to standards) the teacher's individual interpretation, or sense-making, influences the end product. In some cases a district's policy stance may be assumed (informal policy) rather than formally stated; district

actions, including the level and kind (e.g., human, fiscal) of support provided may affect policy implementation. In connecting these findings to alternative teacher preparation policy, this dissertation hypothesizes that many of these same findings would be true in alternative program implementation.

District Support

The available literature suggests that the ways districts support schools also impact policy reform activities. In her review of the literature, Wechsler (2001) found that districts may influence multiple variables at the school level (i.e. administrator leadership, professional development), but the most effective districts had a clear message of expectations and were either highly centralized or highly decentralized. The district had a clear plan as well as a clear delineation of responsibilities.

Districts may be able to provide greater coherence to reform initiatives and federal and state policy implementation by tightening slack resources and mobilizing resources across several schools in a district rather than just in one school. An early district study found that in order for school improvement to occur, districts needed to have union labor peace, steady school board support, and community acceptance of initiatives (Murphy & Hallinger, 1988). Sykes, et al. (2009) agree that these conditions may be important for reform, but also note that most modern, urban districts fail to have these “pre-conditions.”

The literature also underscores the importance of the district providing fiscal and human resources for policy implementation and/or school reform. Price, Ball, and Luks (1995) found that instructional reform in mathematics requires a substantial financial commitment by the district to alter practices. In their study of a district reform initiative,

Malen, Basinger, Gonzalez, and Nutter (2007) found that although the district appeared to have noble intentions for school reform, the district did not provide schools the human or fiscal resources necessary to effect wide-scale reform efforts. In their review of the literature, Sykes et al. (2009) found evidence that in order to support reform, districts not only need to provide the necessary resources, but also districts' "human resource function, including how teachers and administrators are selected, placed and support" misaligned with districts' "instructional mission" (p. 775). These studies suggest that in order for policies to be implemented, the district must support initiatives with both human and resource commitments. The above studies do recognize that the ways in which districts support specific policies does impact their implementation; however, the majority of studies do not unpack this relationship.

Organizational, Political and Cognitive Perspectives of Policy

Researchers have considered multiple perspectives to understand why and how district central offices make implementation decisions. The policy implementation literature has long discussed how policies change once they meet the realities of "street-level bureaucracies" and the influences of individual actors (e.g., Weatherly & Lipsky, 1977). Honig (2007) asserts that central office personnel play a key role in determining how the district supports policy implementation; personnel must grapple with the realities of school-level and district conditions as well as personal views and previous experiences as they implement policy.

While politics in various forms affect policy implementation (e.g., Bardach, 1977; Hargrove, 1985; Knapp, 1997) research on the implementation of education policies often uses the category of politics as a residual, catch-all term to "explain" why policies

were not implemented with fidelity (e.g., Malen, 2006). That is, research may allude to politics and attribute implementation problems to “politics” without defining the construct or arraying the dynamics. The literature does suggest that district leaders may develop and implement policies to legitimize the system and its leaders. Often in response to external threats, district leaders may adopt policies or take actions that might enhance the image of the district and restore confidence in it (Hess, 1999; Ogawa, Sandholtz, Marinez-Flores, and Scribner, 2003; Redmond-Jones and Malen, 2002). Political interactions within the organization also may influence whether and how policies get implemented (Malen, 2006).

Recent research highlights the relevance of how school district central office administrators cognitively “make sense” of policies during implementation (Hightower, Knapp, Marsh, & McLaughlin, 2002; Honig, 2003). Spillane, Reiser, and Reimer (2002) developed a cognitive framework to characterize sense-making during the local implementation process. The researchers postulate that a key factor in policy implementation is how “implementing agents come to understand their practice” (p. 387). Coburn and Talbert (2006) studied how district officials “conceptualize high-quality evidence, appropriate evidence use, and high-quality research” (p. 2). They found individuals’ conceptions varied greatly across the system and depended on organizational and institutional contexts; in other words, officials’ interpretations depended on where they worked in the organization and their involvement in past reforms. These studies suggest that key district leaders’ interpretation of policy shapes implementation; the original policy purpose may be somewhat lost in the translation of policies into programs or practice.

Summary. The district is an important level of analysis when considering policy implementation in schools. Sykes et al. (2009) state that “a main challenge for districts is to forge coherence out of the policy cacophony such that schools and the educators within them can better learn how to continuously modify their practice to improve outcomes for students” (p.773). The district policies on teacher learning, levels of support and the negotiation and translation of policies are all important in an examination of how policies may be translated into alternative teacher preparation programs. The following section proposes a conceptual framework to consider the factors involved in district policy development and implementation.

District Level Conceptual Framework

Multiple factors shape policy design and implementation and multiple, competing theories exist as to how to explain how and why policies develop in specific ways (Honig, 2007). For example, some discuss the act of policy development and implementation from the top leaders of an organization to the bottom (as described in Honig, 2007). Others discuss how the intended implementation of policies changes once they meet the realities of a particular context (e.g., Weatherly & Lipsky, 1977), while still others question whether policies can ever be implemented as originally intended (Cuban, 1990).

In the district context, officials must meet several, often competing, demands in order to comply with state and federal guidelines, as well as to address their local priorities and preferences. Policy implementation dynamics vary with the policy being implemented. Studies have focused on a lot of different issues and policies, but few focus on the implementation of alternative preparation programs. The literature base does

identify some general factors, or forces, that may influence district policy development and implementation, but little literature considers teacher preparation generally or alternative teacher preparation policies or programs specifically at the district level. The forces identified in this dissertation's proposed framework have been synthesized from several literature bases including teacher quality, teacher education, alternative teacher preparation, and district policy implementation. The expectation is that alternative teacher preparation policy development and implementation within districts is a dynamic, fluid process that is shaped by contextual factors and the actions and interactions of various actors. All of these forces, as well as other factors not categorized in the available literature, may interact at the district level to shape district alternative preparation policies and programs.

This section will first consider the broad factors in the national and state alternative preparation policy contexts which may influence the local development and implementation of programs and policies; then the section will propose district level factors, some of which may be present in both the broad policy environment and the local context, to explain the development and implementation of local programs. All of these factors, both broad and local, will be used to guide the collection and analysis of this study's data. Although the factors described in this section are not mutually exclusive, one must attempt to analyze their separate influence on programs and policies in order to unpack how the factors may interact with one another to influence the development and implementation of programs and policies.

Broad Policy Context Factors

The literature on alternative teacher preparation, teacher education, and teacher quality suggest four broad factors important to consider in any alternative teacher policy implementation setting. These four factors provide background context in which to situate specific state and district alternative teacher preparation programs and policies - the federal and state teacher quality provisions; the views and values of policy elites involved in a national debate about teacher education; the nature of the teacher labor market and the prevalence of alternative preparation programs; and the availability, orientation and inclusion of external providers in alternative teacher preparation. This section will review the literature for these factors with the understanding that each factor permeates a discussion of alternative preparation at any level.

Table 2: Broad Policy Context Factors

Federal and State Teacher Quality Policies
National Teacher Education Debate
Teacher Labor Market
External Teacher Providers

Federal and State Teacher Quality Policies

As early as the 1950s, critics attacked public education's supposed lack of rigor and low student achievement (e.g., Conant, 1963). *A Nation at Risk* (1983) focused both public and policymaker attention on teacher quality and teacher education arguments. Report authors claimed that international peers outperformed U.S. students and proposed an overhaul of the education system and an increased accountability system for students. The report posited that in order for student outcomes to improve, the teacher workforce needed to improve; teachers needed to "meet high education standards, to demonstrate an aptitude as a teacher, and to demonstrate competence in an academic discipline" (Nation at Risk, 1983). Underlying these recommendations was the assumption that "improving

teachers' academic qualifications will improve the quality of teaching" (Stoddart & Floden, 1996, p. 87); these assumptions were not grounded in the literature.

The majority of the education research prior to the 1980s, however, did not focus on or address broad policy parameters that may help or hinder student performance (i.e. school/district funding), or what teacher factors may contribute to student achievement (i.e. teacher supply, teacher education, salaries) (Cochran-Smith & Fries, 2005; Lagemann, 2000). Very little, if any, research described *teacher* learning strategies or identified a "valid body of knowledge and skills for the teaching profession" (Cochran-Smith & Fries, 2005, p. 85). Due in part to this lack of research, teacher education received intense criticism. For example, David Kearns, the Deputy Secretary of Education under President George H. Bush, stated,

As everyone knows – particularly teachers – most education courses range from dull to deadly...the reason is deceptively simple – there is, as yet, no science of pedagogy the way there is a science of medicine, for example. Teaching is an art, and the best teachers report that the most valuable things they learned were not in the college classroom but the classroom in which they first taught. The luckiest report that they had mentors who showed them the ropes (as stated in Hawley, 1990, p.4).

The Deputy Secretary's comments were typical of the era and opened the policy window for a barrage of teacher education policy changes including a renewed interest in alternative certification.

A Nation at Risk prompted the creation of numerous national organizations (e.g., Holmes Group, the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards) that called for changes in teacher education to solidify an essential knowledge base for teaching and thereby legitimize the teaching profession. Proposals included increasing and changing accreditation and

certification standards for teacher education programs, fundamentally altering the ways in which teacher education programs and public schools worked together to train teachers, and establishing national standards for the teaching profession (Cochran-Smith & Fries, 2005). Without a firm research base to support the existence of professional knowledge in teaching, however, opposing conservative foundations (e.g., Fordham Institute, American Enterprise Institute) called for a reduction in the requirements of teacher education and consequently in the requirements for teacher certification (Hess, 2002; Kanstoromm & Finn, 1999; Walsh, 2001).

In studying and describing the policy and research context of education during the 20th century, Lagemann (2000) asserts that the education community has been ineffective in lobbying for their interests and thus has negatively affected public opinion and education funding opportunities. Consequently, the education community has been unable to mediate the involvement of the federal government in accountability measures for public education students and teacher education. During the 1998 reauthorization of the Higher Education Act, the federal legislature mandated that institutions of higher education with teacher education programs report their candidates' test scores to assure that candidates were "qualified." The introduction of NCLB legislation in 2001 signaled the continuing decline of the perceived value of teacher education and solidified the foothold of market principles in teacher education by mandating that every child be taught by a "highly qualified" teacher, but leaving the definition of what constituted "highly qualified" to the states (Lagemann, 2000).

The U.S. Department of Education largely stayed out of the states' affairs in reference to teacher education, but began to push its own definitions of teacher quality in

other ways. In 2002, Secretary of Education Riley publicly asserted that the only important characteristics for teachers to possess are high verbal ability and subject matter knowledge (Cochran-Smith, 2005). In 2003, the U.S. Department of Education awarded the American Board for the Certification of Teacher Excellence (ABCTE) a \$35 million five-year grant in order for this private organization to continue and enhance its work in teacher education. ABCTE is an organization offering on-line teacher certification which is currently accepted in six states. In order to be certified with ABCTE, teacher candidates must possess a bachelor's degree and pass two ABCTE developed tests (ABCTE, 2007). These minimal requirements are in stark contrast to the typical certification requirements for traditional teacher education graduates.

These federal and state teacher quality and teacher education provisions permeate alternative preparation policy development and implementation at every level. These accountability policies serve as a background in which to consider local program and policy development and implementation.

National Teacher Education Debate

Without a firm research base to support the existence of a professional knowledge base in teaching and with the publication of *A Nation at Risk* (1983), education critics and policymakers began to call for changes in teacher education; although the argument over the value of teacher education was old, the attention of policymakers caused the argument to become polarized. Cochran-Smith and Fries (2001) describes the two prevalent views in this teacher education debate, “professionalizers” and “deregulators,” as “bi-polar.” Professionalizers promote the professionalization of teaching and teacher education through standards representing the knowledge, skills, and dispositions essential to

practice. As earlier noted, forces galvanized by *A Nation at Risk* prompted professionalizers to create numerous national organizations (e.g., the Holmes Group, the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards) that called for changes in teacher education to solidify a knowledge base for teaching and to legitimate the teaching profession. Proposals included increasing and changing accreditation and certification standards for teacher education programs, fundamentally altering the ways in which teacher education programs and public schools worked together to train teachers, and establishing national standards for the teaching profession (Cochran-Smith & Fries, 2005). Some states also began to increase the regulatory requirements for teacher certification. For example, in some states aspiring teachers had to pass exams and graduate from an approved teacher education program (Angus, 2001; Wilson et al., 2001).

In contrast, deregulators assert that requirements for teaching entry should be reduced and teacher education schools should be dismantled to break up their monopoly of the teacher education industry. To increase the potential pool of capable teachers, this camp advocates using a market framework to reform teacher education (Cochran-Smith & Fries, 2001; Walsh & Jacobs, 2007). In response to *A Nation at Risk*, conservative foundations (e.g., Fordham Institute, American Enterprise Institute), deregulators, called for a reduction in the requirements of teacher education programs and consequently in the requirements for teacher certification (Hess, 2002; Kanstoromm & Finn, 1999; Walsh, 2001). Kanstoromm and Finn (1999) argued that many teacher education programs were just "Mickey Mouse programs" that added little real value to the education of teachers.

To address the teacher questions raised in *A Nation at Risk*, deregulators advocated for alternative certification, or alternative teacher preparation, as one policy solution to improve the quality of the teacher workforce. The argument for alternative preparation derived in part from

the fact that teacher shortages...usually have been met by filling positions with persons who are given emergency certificates and little training. Thus, it is argued, when conventionally certified teachers cannot be found, it is better to have formal programs for recruiting, preparing, and supporting prospective teachers than it is to use emergency licensing procedures to fill teaching vacancies. (Hawley, 1990, p. 4)

Proponents argued that alternative programs could help alleviate teacher shortages, attract nontraditional candidates to teaching, and increase the overall quality of teachers by relying more on content coursework rather than teacher preparation programs; they argued that teacher certification should be simplified so that these teacher candidates might develop their teaching skills in their classrooms (Cochran-Smith & Fries, 2001).

On the other hand, professionalizers argued that teacher candidates needed the opportunity to develop teaching skills through the integration of practice teaching and pedagogical classes and that certification standards should reflect this necessity; they typically found alternative teacher education programs counterproductive to their purpose of professionalizing teaching because alternative programs often lacked pedagogical training (Sykes & Burian-Fitzgerald, 2004).

This ideological debate has raged into the 21st century and with the passage of NCLB, alternative teacher preparation policies have become a prominent feature of the teacher education landscape (Cochran-Smith, 2005). Although both professionalizers and deregulators typically diagnose and describe teacher quality differently, both ideological

sides typically agree that the size and the quality of the current pool of teachers are insufficient to meet the nation's demand for teachers (Rice, 2003). The values and opinions of both professionalizers and deregulators again serve as an important subtext in order to consider the development and implementation of alternative programs at the district level.

Teacher Labor Market

Teacher staffing issues shape teacher policy generally and district efforts to increase the pool of qualified teachers more specifically. In their review of the alternative preparation literature, Wilson et al. (2001) found that, "by 1993, 40 states had created postbaccalaureate alternate routes into teaching as a way of reducing shortages in critical areas such as mathematics and science, attracting non-traditional entrants, and finding staff for urban and rural schools" (p. i.). This literature suggests that states and districts with teacher shortages often rely on alternative preparation programs to increase teacher numbers.

In an analysis of teacher policy across three states, Rice, Roellke, Sparks, and Kolbe (2009) found that teacher policies appear to be handled differently in Connecticut, New York, and Maryland due to the contextual factors of teacher supply, the socio-economic status of communities and schools, and collective bargaining agreements. The researchers found that alternative teacher preparation policy formation in these three states depended on the status of the teacher labor market. Without further literature on this topic, it seems reasonable to speculate that if the state labor market drives alternative preparation policies, then the individual district's teacher staffing status can be expected to do so as well.

External providers

In recent years, external organizations have played an increasingly important role in school districts' efforts to increase student achievement and teacher professional development. External organizations may include colleges or universities, private foundations, professional organizations, subject-area networks, foundations, or non-profits. According to Burch (2002), the activity of these "nonsystem actors" has increased, "Especially in decentralized school districts, schools often deal directly with outside organizations for services, such as staff development, rather than looking exclusively to the district for support" (Burch, 2002, p. 112). With the increasing accountability pressures described above, these external organizations may have an amplified role in policy development and implementation at every level.

For example, in their discussion of the University of Pittsburgh's Institute for Learning (IFL), Resnick and Glennan (2002) stated that districts often focus on program management and politics rather than on the "instructional core." According to these researchers, organizations like IFL help districts to "build a district's capacity to bring about improvement in instructional practices and to engage in continuous learning" (p. 167).

In sum, scholars recognize the importance of context in policy design and implementation, but have not consistently identified and unpacked the aspects of the context that may be important to consider. For the purposes of this study, the literature suggests these four broad factors may be particularly important to consider in any setting of a study of alternative teacher preparation.

District Policy Context Factors

Building on the broader factors, this sub-section considers district level factors which may directly impact the development and implementation of alternative preparation policies and programs. Some of these factors may be encompassed within the aforementioned broader factors, but one must recognize their local relevance in order to anticipate their local impact on program and policy development and implementation. Some of the descriptions below may be brief because of their broader construction in the literature review in the previous section;

Table 3: District Policy Context Factors

Teacher Labor Market
Teacher Quality Policies
Leadership Views and Values
Organizational Capacity
District Size and Socio-Economic Status
External Teacher Providers

Local Teacher Labor Market

Feistrizer and Haar (2007) state that the increase in alternative preparation programs in recent years may be partially attributed to “their being responsive to the needs of different populations of individuals who are now choosing to teach...where the demands for teachers are greatest” (p. 9). If a district has a hard time finding enough traditionally-prepared teachers to fill vacancies, they are more likely to create and rely on alternative teacher preparation programs that recruit career changers and other experienced adults into the profession. The status of the local teacher labor market is critical to understanding the prevalence and development of alternative teacher preparation programs in any given district.

Teacher Quality Policies.

The recent growth of state and federal accountability movements may be a broad contextual factor considered as districts develop and implement alternative teacher preparation programs. As earlier noted, while professionalizers and deregulators typically diagnose and describe teacher quality differently, both professionals and practitioners typically agree that the size and quality of the current pool of teachers are insufficient to meet the nation's demand for teachers (Rice, 2003). The outcomes and repercussions of the national teacher education debate directly impact the policies proposed to "fix" teacher quality issues. Although NCLB does have a "highly-qualified teacher" provision, the open-ended nature of this policy allows states to define teacher quality for themselves and to adopt teacher quality policies that they believe will attract and retain quality teachers. Alternative teacher preparation may be considered by some as one policy to increase teacher quality, but several other policy options exist. Although each of these policy options may be promoted by individual states, they have been included as a district level factor because districts in the state of Maryland often handle these options in very different ways. The following paragraphs summarize district teacher quality efforts in general.

One policy widely used by districts to increase teacher quality is financial incentives. Policy proposals involving financial incentives may include signing bonuses, loan forgiveness, housing support, tuition support, or stipends/rewards based on an increase in student achievement (Cohn & Geske, 2004; Rice, 2003). Professionalizers state that salaries should be increased to make teaching a more attractive career and a more rewarding experience (Cohn & Geske, 2004). Given that most teachers fall under a single salary schedule, this proposal would likely involve across the board pay raises for

all teachers. Professionalizers advocate the use of National Board Certification (NBC) as a way to promote teacher quality; to earn NBC teachers must meet several national standards through teaching analysis and portfolios. In many states, NBC teachers would be rewarded for their efforts through salary increases, bonuses and incentives (Rice & Hall, 2005; Sanders et al., 2005).

On the other hand, deregulators typically argue that economic rewards in the form of bonuses or differentiated pay should be given to teachers who improve their productivity and student achievement; part of the 2009 U.S. Federal Stimulus package includes monies which will be used to support teacher “pay-for-performance” plans (Turque & Glod, 2009). Multiple factors, however, including teacher collective bargaining agreements, prevent many systems from instituting these policies. Any of these proposals may be coupled with recruitment, retention, or teacher education initiatives to improve teacher quality.

A second policy targets hiring and recruitment strategies to improve teacher quality. Both professionalizers and deregulators agree that recruitment in hard-to-staff districts warrants attention, especially since children in these areas are usually underachieving (Darling-Hammond et al., 2005). Professionalizers argue no matter whom you recruit into teaching, all should be required to attend a teacher education program prior to becoming full-time teachers and that districts should not be hiring uncertified and alternatively certified teachers. Deregulators argue that the field should be opened up for teachers; principals and schools should have more control over teachers they hire instead of having to hire certified teachers who don't want to work in hard-to-staff schools or districts (Hess, 2002). Hiring policies may include simplifying hiring

procedures, offering certification reciprocity across districts and states, or offering candidates “on-the-spot” teaching contracts (Rice et al., 2009). Again, any one of these policies may be coupled with policy approaches in other categories.

Retention policies are a third group of teacher quality policy options. Ingersoll and Smith (2003) found that between 40-50% of teachers leave the field in their first five years of teaching. Several studies have found a positive relationship between teacher experience and student achievement (Grissmer, Flanagan, Kawata & Williamson, 2000; Ladd, 1996; Murnane & Phillips, 1981), therefore it appears advantageous for school systems to retain their teachers. Both professionalizers and deregulators identify teacher retention as a serious problem, but the ideological line between their policy proposals on this subject is unclear. Over the last twenty-five years, researchers have identified factors, including job dissatisfaction, salary, and levels of autonomy, that may influence teacher attrition and retention (Ingersoll, 2001, 2003). Proposed policies include teacher induction programs, professional development, leadership promotion, teacher leadership opportunities, class-size reduction, instructional support, and increased teacher autonomy. Many of these recruitment and retention policies are typically coupled with economic incentives, professional development, or other organizational improvements to support the efforts to increase teacher quality.

Only a few studies have considered how these different policy options may be packaged and utilized together to improve teacher quality (e.g., Rice et al., 2009). This limited research base, however, does suggest that the individual state or district context shapes the development and implementation of these policies (Rice, 2008). Therefore, one may assume the district implementation of alternative teacher preparation policies

and programs as a teacher quality policy option depends in part on how states and districts implement other teacher quality proposals and policies.

Leadership Views

Multiple scholars document that “District leadership – including leader’s knowledge, skills, exercise of influence, and understanding of reform context – also influences the implementation of state policy” (Marsh, 2002, p. 31). Local leaders construct varying ideas of what a particular reform means based upon their own views and values. They then promote those ideas through policy design, development, and implementation (Spillane, 1998). Therefore, it is reasonable to hypothesize that a leader’s views of the district’s teacher staffing patterns, teacher education and alternative teacher education programs, state policy requirements, and other local contextual factors converge to guide the creation and implementation of alternative teacher preparation programs.

Other researchers have expanded the definition of “leader” to include central office staff in general. Rather than treating the central office as a monolithic entity that only serves as background context in studies of school reform, some researchers have treated central office staff as key players whose views, values, and “sense-making” impact policy development and implementation (Coburn & Talbert, 2006; Honig, 2007; Honig & Coburn, 2008). Marsh et al. (2005) found that the central office staff constrained instructional improvement by either not agreeing with or not understanding key policy provisions. Honig (2006) states that it is important for the central office to have ongoing professional development investments to build capacity. This dissertation

will consider “leadership” to include both the organizational leads and mid-level central office bureaucrats.

Organizational Structure/Capacity.

Organizational, or district central office, structures and dynamics may affect the development and implementation of district policy. Organizations are based on “rules, practices, procedures, conventions and strategies that affect how organizations make decisions and operate” (Collinson & Cook, 2007, p. 24). Levitt and March (1988) state that actions in an organization are based on routines, they are history dependant and target oriented. The organization’s standard-operating procedures and routines

are transmitted through socialization, education, imitation, professionalization, personnel movement, mergers, and acquisitions. They are recorded in a collective memory that is often coherent but is sometimes jumbled, that often endures but is sometimes lost. (Levitt & March, 1988, p.320)

When organizations have multiple, hierarchical levels, as many school districts do, the “interactions among them are complex” (Levitt & March, 1988, p.324). The routines and procedures for operation may be confused and influenced by the perceptions of organization member interactions rather than by agreed upon organizational goals. In addition, where the organizational leadership is not stable and the organizational levels are not tightly integrated,

Goals are ambiguous, and commitment to them is confounded by their relation to personal and subgroup objectives...Organizations facing complex uncertainties rely on informally shared understandings more than do organizations dealing with simpler, more stable environments. (Levitt & March, 1988, p. 325-327)

The district organizational structures, procedures, and routines may be reflective of the organization’s capacity.

The notion of capacity has often been analyzed more at the school rather than the district level (e.g., Elmore, 2002; Spillane & Thompson, 1997). Honig (2006) defined “capacity” as a variety of supports whose “value depends on what particular people in certain places are trying to and are currently able to accomplish” (p. 185). The concept of capacity is multi-dimensional and includes the ability of organizations to leverage resources (e.g., fiscal, human) to meet school or system goals (Malen & Rice, 2004). The potential dissonance between organizational goals and the ability of central office staff to accomplish goals given the alignment, or misalignment, of resources with district goals may impact policy development and implementation (Honig, 2006).

Birkeland (2005) found that alternative teacher preparation programs need a high level of organizational capacity to be successful; the resources necessary to build and maintain the program require both the entity sponsoring the program and the partnering district to collaboratively leverage resources to meet program goals. “Resources necessary for this capability may include money to launch a recruitment campaign, faculty who can design and teach a curriculum, established systems for assessment, and the trust and cooperation of school district personnel” (Birkeland, 2005, p. 56). The district’s desire to build alternative programs may be genuine, but the necessary commitment of resources for implementation may not. Johnson et al. (2005) found that many alternative preparation programs had to compromise initial program ideals and promises due to a lack of capacity for implementation with either the district or sponsoring entity.

District Size and Socio-Economic Status.

The literature suggests that the size and wealth of a district make a difference in policy implementation. Using survey and national archival data about the status of standards-based reform efforts, Hannaway and Kimball (2001) found that larger districts,

...appear to be better able to promote or facilitate reform than small districts, probably because they have greater specialized areas of expertise, such as dedicated units for assessment and professional development, slack resources available to direct to district reform due to economies of scale, and better access to technical assistance. (p. 119)

The existing organizational structures and potential resources available to larger and wealthier districts may allow them to implement reforms that smaller districts may not be able to institute. In their study of five school districts in Maine and Maryland, Fairman and Firestone (2001) found that the differences in districts' size and organizational structure contributed to how they approached teachers' instructional improvement and responses to state tests.

In their case study of Community District #2 in New York City, Elmore and Burney (1997) found that local districts,

may have certain 'natural' advantages in supporting sustained instructional improvement through professional development. Districts can achieve economies of scale in acquiring the services of consultants; they can introduce strong incentives for principals and teachers to pay attention to the improvement of teaching in specific domains; they can create opportunities for interactions among professionals that schools might not be able to do by themselves; and they can make creative use of multi-pocket budgeting to generate resources to focus on instructional improvement. (p. 30)

Despite recognizing that districts may be able to utilize resources to support school reform activities, the researchers acknowledge that very few district officials have been able to leverage resources efficiently. These studies suggest that, in theory, larger

districts may be better positioned for the implementation of wide-scale school reform by utilizing the available resources and organizational structures available to them.

In addition, Hannaway and Kimball (2001) found in their comparison of multiple districts, that despite the advantage large districts may have through their access to resources and specialized departments, high poverty levels seemed to diminish the advantages of larger districts. The researchers do not analyze this finding in great detail; however, the literature on urban school systems suggests that organizational systems that are unable to accomplish system goals may contribute to ineffective policy implementation (e.g., Orr, 1998). Given that many alternative preparation programs may be found in larger, higher poverty school districts, it seems reasonable to hypothesize that the size and wealth of the district will influence the development and implementation of policies and programs.

External Teacher Providers.

As described above, external organizations have played an increasing role in districts' efforts to increase student achievement. Multiple external providers have emerged to not only shape districts' teacher professional development policies, but also to offer teacher education training.

Colleges and universities may play a role in districts' interest in alternative teacher preparation. For example, Maryland colleges and universities participate in Professional Development Schools (PDS) for their traditional teacher education candidates; several colleges and universities partner with local school systems to provide alternative teacher preparation programs. Although the original purpose of alternative teacher certification was to provide an alternate teacher preparation method from

traditional college and university pathways, nationally, colleges and universities operate many of alternative teacher preparation programs (Feistritzer & Haar, 2007). Some believe that although these college and university programs utilize the alternative teacher preparation state certification label, many of these programs look very much like traditional programs (Peterson & Nadler, 2009; Walsh & Jacobs, 2007).

Other teacher preparation entities including The New Teacher Project (TNTP) and Teach for America (TFA) have become increasingly prominent in hard-to-staff urban or rural districts. These organizations recruit candidates nationally and provide opportunities for nontraditional teacher candidates to earn certification and sometimes a master's degree through alternative certification. Like other external organizations, these organizations have their own agendas. TNTP's mission is to close the student achievement gap by ensuring that high-need students have high-quality teachers. The non-profit organization's mission has several business-lines that address research-based teacher recruitment, selection, training and retention issues in order to increase the quality of the teaching force and the district's capacity to retain them (www.tntp.org). TFA's mission is to eliminate educational inequity by recruiting outstanding recent college graduates to teach in high-needs schools for two years. After the two year-year commitment, TFA encourages their alumni to become involved in the fight in education inequity at a leadership and policy level (www.teachforamerica.org). Both of these organizations have agendas which may complement the goals of any school district, but the methods they employ to realize their mission may impact a district's alternative teacher preparation policy implementation efforts.

Whether a private philanthropic organization, college or university, or private teacher education provider, these external organizations may have an impact on district policy and implementation decisions. In recent years, some have called for a change in the way “non-system actors” and school system’s work together. Bachetti, Ehrlich, and Shulman (2006) propose several guidelines to improve relationships between non-profit organizations and the education sector. Sample guidelines include promoting “openness” to make sure that all stakeholders are honest with one another throughout a project; an “external review” to assure that a researcher evaluates the project; and “professional development” to assure that all stakeholders have an understanding of the funded policies and projects. Regardless of the external organizations involved, their involvement in the district may change the trajectory, positive or negative, of policy implementation.

Politics

Although politics permeates policy design and implementation at every level of the system, its relevance at the local level should be considered. As stated earlier, policy implementation research often uses the category of “politics” as residual, catch-all term to “explain” why policies are not implemented with fidelity (Malen, 2006). For the purposes of this study of alternative preparation, politics refers to how district leaders seek to regulate actual or potential conflicts and to legitimize decisions with both governmental authorities and public constituencies. Initiating an alternative preparation program or hiring an external provider to do so may help the district convince governmental authorities and public constituencies that the district leadership deserves their support because it is addressing salient problems in innovative and appropriate ways.

Politics also refers to how a district may seek out or dodge alternative teacher preparation depending in part on whether these programs will enhance or tarnish their image in the eyes of the public. The district leadership may be very motivated to launch and promote new alternative programs in order to show the public that the district is attempting to meet teacher staffing or teacher quality needs (e.g., Hess, 1999). Conversely, due to the polarizing nature of the alternative teacher preparation debate, districts may purposefully steer away from alternative preparation to avoid tarnishing their image or creating tensions within the organization.

Individual actors' values and beliefs and their experiences with past reforms, local and national colleagues and external organizations all may impact their perspectives on specific policy initiatives as well as their willingness to implement them. If individuals in the system have competing views of what policies can and should be instituted, then 'politics' may come into play.

Summary. Although potentially not an exhaustive list, the categories identified in this conceptual framework represent those areas found to be important in implementation of education policies and therefore hypothesized to be relevant in an analysis of factors shaping the development and implementation of alternative teacher preparation policies and programs. This study will provide evidence confirming or disaffirming the importance of the identified district factors as well as identify any emergent factors that impact the development and implementation of alternative preparation policy implementation in the districts under study.

Chapter Summary and Conceptual Framework

The nested nature of government agencies at the federal, state, and local levels and their overlapping jurisdictions make it difficult to peel away the layers to see how individuals and organizations interact to design and implement a specific policy. In Berend's (2009) commentary on policy implementation research, he states, "...what is needed are theories that address the variation in policies at the federal, state, and local levels with clear direction about how to operationalize key concepts within empirical data" (p. 851). This study of alternative preparation programs and policies attempts to provide some insights as to the factors influencing the alternative teacher preparation policy option.

Using four literature streams, this study's conceptual framework identifies and delineates factors in the alternative preparation policy environment at all levels and then "operationalizes" these definitions to understand the local development and implementation of alternative teacher preparation program and policies. Graphic 1 illustrates the relationship between the various levels of the conceptual framework.

The program-level framework provides analytic categories to systematically describe program dimensions including program operation, entry process, training components, theory of action, and program outcomes. The program features and district factors converge at the forefront of the conceptual framework and link with the realities of the broader policy environment to shape the districts' alternative teacher preparation policies and programs. This framework attempts to account for the multiple, overlapping factors involved in the development and implementation of alternative preparation policies and programs.

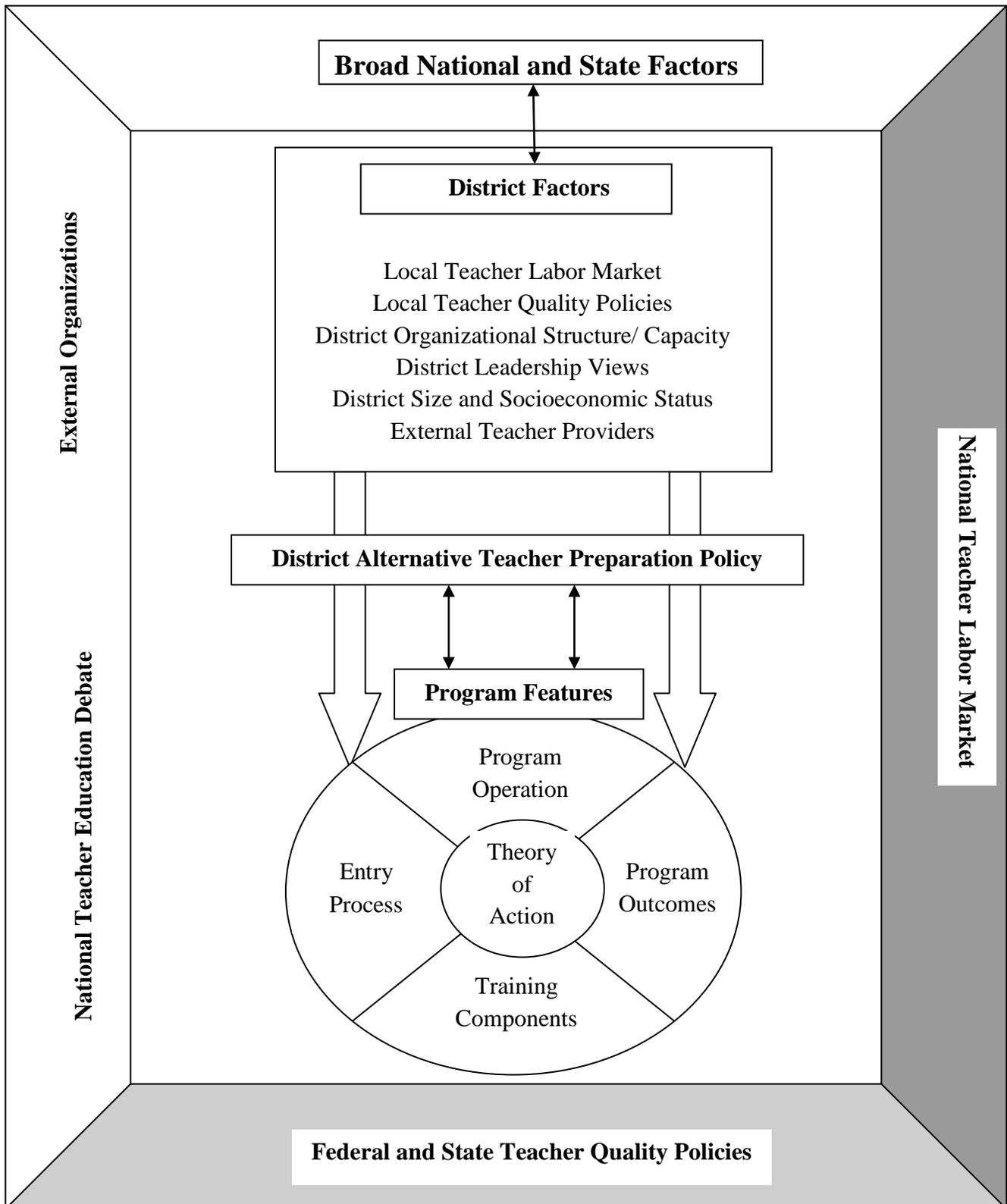
The alternative preparation, teacher education and teacher quality literatures suggest certain factors which may be relevant in policy and program development and implementation across localities. These factors - the national teacher education debate, the national teacher labor market, the availability and orientation of external providers, and the provisions of state and federal policies - may interact and influence any alternative preparation program or policy decision and are important at every level (local, state and federal). For example, since NLCB required districts accepting Title I funds to meet highly qualified teacher provisions, it influenced the hiring decisions and creation of some alternative preparation programs in some districts. Part of this dissertation's purpose is to recognize that these factors are broadly imbedded in the national and state policy contexts and to discuss how these factors permeate the local level and interact to shape programs and policies.

The teacher quality and district policy implementation literatures suggest additional local factors which may influence policy and program design and implementation. These overlapping factors – local teacher labor markets, local teacher quality policies, leadership views, district capacity/organizational structure, district size and socio-economic status, external teacher providers interact to form the district's alternative teacher preparation policy. Whether the district's alternative preparation policy is formal or informal, the federal, state and district policy contexts and the development and implementation of program features shape the district alternative preparation policies and programs.

Taken together, this study's frameworks provide conceptual tools to collect and analyze data about the development and implementation of alternative preparation

programs and policies. This framework will first be used to develop two separate cases and then to provide a cross-case analysis to ascertain the relative importance of these factors in two different local contexts in the same state policy context.

**District Alternative Teacher Preparation Program and Policy
Development and Implementation Conceptual Framework**



Chapter Three: Methodology

The purpose of this study was to address gaps in the alternative preparation literature by considering how two Maryland school districts translated state alternative teacher preparation policies into programs during the 2007-2008 school year. The following overarching question guided this research:

How do local district policy contexts interact with state and national policy contexts to shape the development and implementation of alternative preparation programs?

To answer this overarching study question, each district case study answered three questions.

1. What are the key features of programs?
2. What local factors shaped programs' development and implementation?
3. How do those local factors interact with state and national factors to account for the design and implementation of programs?

The cross-case analysis of the two districts then considered the following two questions.

1. How are program features similar and different across districts?
2. How do local, state, and national factors account for these differences?

To examine how the district policy context influenced the development and implementation of local alternative teacher preparation programs and policies, I used a cross-case study design. This chapter first describes that design and the rationale for case

selection and then describes data collection and analysis, the checks used to enhance reliability and validity, and the strengths and limitations of the study.

Rationale for Study Design and Case Selection

Gerring (2007) describes the term “case study” as a “definitional morass” (p. 17).

Researchers attach several meanings to case study work including, but not limited to, qualitative, small-N work; the collection of a particular type of evidence (ethnographic, clinical, participant-observation, process-tracing, historical, etc.); naturalistic evidence gathering; the employment of triangulation in data collection and analysis; investigating the properties of a single observation; and investigating a single phenomenon (George & Bennett, 2005; Gerring, 2007). This dissertation adopts Yin’s definition of a case study because his definition not only incorporates these common features but also delineates the conditions in which this approach to research is particularly appropriate.

Given the highly politicized nature of the alternative teacher preparation policies and programs, this dissertation utilizes case studies as a way to identify the key features of particular alternative preparation programs and to unpack the contextual factors shaping alternative teacher preparation in the local context. Yin (2003) states that the case study method should be chosen when “you deliberately want to uncover contextual conditions – believing that they might be highly pertinent to your phenomenon of study” (p. 13). This exploratory case study on the alternative preparation phenomenon in these two districts may enable the researcher to uncover the contextual conditions at play in program development and implementation and serve as an initial “test” of the dissertation’s proposed conceptual framework.

The overlapping and often nested nature of the multiple factors involved in alternative teacher preparation program development and implementation makes it difficult to characterize and describe influences on programs. The cross-case study method lent itself to the purposes of this dissertation; using two districts operating in the same state policy environment allowed local contextual factors impacting the development and implementation of programs to become more visible. George & Bennett (2005) state a "...growing consensus that the strongest means of drawing inferences from case studies is the use of a combination of within-case analysis and cross-case comparisons within a single study or research program" (p. 18). I purposefully chose two districts with opposite experiences in the same regional teacher labor market.

Yin (2003) states that when using two or more cases, "Each case must be carefully selected so that it...predicts contrasting results but for predictable reasons" (p. 47). The research base suggests a relationship between the prevalence of alternative preparation programs and a district's ability to recruit teachers (e.g., Bliss, 1990; Feistritzer, 2007). Districts that consistently do not meet teacher recruitment goals have a higher number of alternative preparation programs resulting in a higher percentage of new teachers earning certification through alternative pathways. These predictable similarities and differences allowed for focused comparisons through general questions reflecting the dissertation purposes and standardized data collection and analysis (Gerring, 2007).

This dissertation focused on Maryland, in part, because of its long standing history of using alternative teacher certification and preparation programs. In 1990, the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) created an alternative teacher

certificate, the Resident Teacher Certificate (RTC). Maryland was one of the earliest states to have an alternative teacher preparation certificate (Walsh, 2001) and is a national leader in alternative teacher preparation program standards (Dunkle personal correspondence, 2009). Maryland was one of the first states to apply program standards to alternative preparation and was involved in creating national alternative teacher preparation standards with the National Association for Alternative Certification (Dunkle personal correspondence, 2009). Maryland's long-standing tradition with alternative preparation provided a unique opportunity to consider program development and implementation over time.

Despite existing in the same state policy context and abiding by state alternative teacher preparation policy regulations and definitions, school districts across the state differed vastly in the number and types of alternative programs they incorporated. These similarities in state context and differences in local development and implementation provided an opportunity to examine the local factors involved. The following section describes in greater detail the state alternative preparation policy context and the two districts selected for this cross-case analysis.

Maryland Policy Context

In 1990, the Maryland Governor's Commission on School Reform pushed the education reform agenda to the forefront of state policy issues by advocating the elimination of rules, regulations and other constraints that prevented entrance into teaching. One way Maryland addressed this concern for individuals who already had a college degree was through the introduction of the Resident Teacher Certificate (RTC). The RTC was "designed to attract and recruit liberal arts graduates and career changers

who possess academic content backgrounds in the arts and sciences” into the teaching profession (Maryland Teacher Staffing Report, 2002). To obtain the RTC, individuals needed to (1) earn a bachelor’s degree from an accredited institution, (2) earn at least a 3.0 in their area of teaching concentration, (3) complete 135 clock hours of study, and (4) pass both Praxis I and II content tests in their certification area. While teaching under the RTC, individuals also needed to (1) complete additional hours of study (45 for secondary certification, 135 for elementary certification), (2) receive mentoring, (3) receive satisfactory teaching evaluations, and (4) complete any outstanding Praxis requirements. Upon completing these requirements, the district superintendent could recommend candidates for the Standard Professional Certificate (SPC).

In Maryland, districts did not make extensive use of the RTC, until after the passage of No Child Left Behind (NCLB). The 2000–2002 Maryland Teacher Staffing Report states that Maryland districts had hired only 500 teachers under the RTC since 1990 (Walsh, 2001). According to the 2005 Maryland Title II report, between 2002 and 2004, the number of Maryland alternative route program completers rose by 87% (U.S. Department of Education, 2005)⁴.

In 2005, the Maryland State Board of Education approved changes to state regulations (Code of Maryland Regulations - COMAR) that permitted the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) to implement a program approval process for the RTC; programs would then be Maryland Approved Alternative Preparation Programs, or MAAPPs. The proposal suggested that if alternative preparation was a coherent program of study involving either college coursework or state-approved training modules rather

⁴ There has been much discussion in Maryland as to the reported accuracy of the number of individuals utilizing the Resident Teacher Certificate due to inconsistent local certification reporting and database tracking (Dunkle personal correspondence, 2009).

than candidates taking piecemeal coursework (like provisionally certified teachers), more districts and programs would utilize the RTC.

In January 2007, MSDE officially changed the requirements for the RTC (See Table 3 next page). The new provisions require that program providers (colleges/universities and private providers) must partner with local education agencies (school districts) to obtain approval from the state to operate a MAAPP and that the partnering local education agency must guarantee teaching employment to candidates graduating from the program. In 2005, the state began to require a program approval visitation, mirrored after the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE), every five years for continuing state approval. In order to receive state program approval, each program must submit a proposal outlining the following areas:

- the certification areas in which the program seeks to train teachers;
- a rationale for the program;
- how the program will use state standards (Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium - INTASC or Essential Dimensions of Teaching Standards - EDOTs) to guide program development and assessment;
- program entrance requirements;
- the content and structures of pre-employment training, the internship, and the residency;
- performance assessment for both candidates and the program;
- program management, including program governance; and
- how the program will adapt the program to meet the changing yearly needs of the local district (Retrieved and adapted on April 15, 2008 from http://www.marylandpublicschools.org/MSDE/divisions/certification/progapproval/maapp_10_07.htm).

Ultimately the decision of whether or not to utilize an alternative preparation program rests with individual school districts in Maryland. If district leaders do not sign

the state program proposal agreeing to partner with a program provider, alternatively prepared teachers will not be prepared or hired in that district. If the district is unable to guarantee a position for a MAAPP teacher, the state will not approve the program. Additionally, because the district superintendent requests both RTC and the SPC for candidates, the district is in the position to determine who is recommended for certification and who is not.

Table 4: RTC Requirements *

Previous Entry Requirements	January 2007 Revisions (Current Entry & Hiring Requirements)
1. Must possess a bachelor's degree.	1. Must possess a bachelor's degree.
2. Must have earned at least a 3.0 GPA in subject certification area (different subject certifications require a different number of required courses).	2. Must have earned at least a 2.75 GPA in subject certification area (different certifications require a different number of required courses).
3. Must complete 135 clock hours of training.	3. Must complete 90 clock hours of "pre-employment" training that include the first appropriate reading class.
4. Must pass the Praxis I and Praxis II content tests.	4. Must be enrolled in a state-approved RTC program.
	5. Must complete a 4- to 8- week supervised internship.
	6. Must pass the Praxis I and Praxis II content tests.
To Move from an RTC to a Standard Professional Certificate	
Previous	Current
1. Complete additional hours of study (45 for secondary certification, 135 for elementary certification).	1. Complete an approved RTC program that includes a supervised residency of at least one year.
2. Pass Praxis II pedagogy test.	2. Pass Praxis II pedagogy test,
3. Receive satisfactory principal evaluations.	3. Receive satisfactory principal evaluations.

*Data from Maryland Teacher Staffing Report (2002–2004) and MSDE Guidelines for Implementing Approved Alternative Preparation Programs (2007)

District Cases

This dissertation includes a cross-case study of two geographically adjacent suburban school districts in Maryland – Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS)

and Prince George's County Public Schools (PGCPS). The districts are the largest and second largest in Maryland and rank as two of the largest districts nationally. Both must follow the same state policies, compete for an overlapping pool of potential teachers, fall under the same Maryland school district funding formulas, and have pockets of excellence with high schools nationally ranked (e.g., Newsweek's Challenge Index, 2008). Due in part to the size and diversity of the districts, they both have schools with high student achievement and schools struggling to meet state achievement guidelines. PGCPS has sizable and chronic teacher shortages and a large number of schools (approximately 34% in 2007-2008 school year) in the school improvement continuum while MCPS has teacher shortages in select subject areas and fewer schools (approximately 12% in the 2007-2008 school year) in the school improvement continuum (Retrieved from <http://msp2007.msde.state.md.us/> on April 9, 2010). As outlined in the next section, the districts are considered different in many ways, including, but not limited to, socioeconomic status, local perceptions of the quality of education, student diversity, the capacity to compete in the local teacher labor markets, and historically different student achievement outcomes.

These district facts allowed me to predict from the outset a relationship between the local teacher labor market and the prevalence of alternative teacher preparation programs in each district: MCPS's four alternative preparation-related programs between 1999 and 2008 may be related to the district's ability to meet teacher recruitment goals while PGCPS's eleven alternative programs in the same time period may be related to the district's inability to meet teacher recruitment goals. Given this relationship between market forces and programs, I focused on the factors in the district policy context that

may have influenced the number as well as the nature of programs. The following paragraphs describe the two districts in more detail.

Montgomery County Public Schools

Montgomery County, Maryland is one of the wealthiest and most-educated counties in the country. In 2007, the median household income was \$91,440. In 2000, 54.6% of Montgomery County citizens had a bachelor's degree or higher. In 2000, notably before the housing price wars of the early 2000s, the median value of owner-occupied housing units was \$221,800 (Retrieved from <http://quickfacts.census.gov> on October 1, 2009).

MCPS has the most ethnically diverse student population in Maryland with an ever increasing immigrant population (Jones & Hill, 1998). The 2000 census states that 26.7% of Montgomery County citizens were "foreign-born" (Retrieved from <http://quickfacts.census.gov> on May 1, 2010). Despite Montgomery County's overall wealth, the county has struggled to serve children of minority, low-income, and immigrant families with both academic and social policies (Jones & Hill, 1998; Muskin, 2007). In recent years, the district has made a concerted effort to redistribute resources to low performing schools and regions of the county that need more assistance to improve student achievement (Olson, 2008).

As of fall 2007, MCPS served almost 145,700 students in 199 schools (Chick, 2007). About one-fifth of these students received free or reduced lunch (Rice et al., 2009). MCPS serves its diverse student body in both urban and suburban settings with "an overwhelming number of minority, lower socio-economic, and ELL students attend(ing) school in the district's urban elementary schools" (Rice et al., 2005, p. 47).

The general public perceives MCPS as a high achieving district (Chick, 2007); despite this perception, in 2007, 23 (13%) of its schools were in the state school improvement continuum (Muskin, 2007).

The district has little trouble recruiting and hiring teachers; MCPS typically receives over 15,000 teaching applications each year for its 700-1000 vacancies (Rice, 2009). For the 2007-08 school year, MCPS hired approximately 750 teachers to fill vacancies. As a MCPS spokesman stated to a *Washington Times* reporter, “The county (MCPS) had an excellent applicant pool from which to choose, despite the competitive market...The school attracts teachers in part because of its academic successes” (Chick, 2007, p. B1).

Although MCPS does not have a problem filling most vacancies, it does struggle to fill specific content area vacancies including mathematics, science, and special education (Rice, 2009). The alternative teacher preparation research base posits that districts without a teacher staffing problem will have fewer alternative teacher preparation programs than those without a staffing problem (Feistritzer & Haar, 2007). This expectation holds true in MCPS; during the 2007-2008 school year the district had only one Maryland Approved Alternative Preparation Program (MAAPP) utilizing the resident teacher certificate – a partnership with Montgomery Community College; however, MCPS did have seven higher education partnerships for initial teacher certification operating during the same school year.

Dr. Jerry Weast has served as the MCPS superintendent since 1999. The Public School Superintendents Association of Maryland named Dr. Weast the 2003 Maryland State Superintendent of the Year; he was one of the final four candidates for the 2003

National Superintendent of the Year award. His longevity in the position has provided stability to the organization and he has earned the trust of key stakeholders within the community (de Vise, 2006; Hightower et al., 2002; Olson, 2008).

Prince George's County Public Schools

Prince George's County is considered one of the most affluent African-American suburbs in the country. In 2007, the median household income was \$67,706. In 2000, 27.2% of the county's citizens had a bachelor's degree or higher. In 2000, again before the housing wars of the 2000s, the median value of owner-occupied units was \$145,600 (Retrieved from <http://quickfacts.census.gov> on November 15, 2009). Despite this wealth, many of its communities, especially those closest to Washington, D.C. are inundated with poverty-related social issues such as under-housing, violence, and unemployment (Johnson, 2002).

PGCPS has a majority minority student population with 75% African-American, 16% Hispanic, and 9% Caucasian and other ethnicities (Maryland Report Card, 2007). The district serves over 133,000 students in more than two hundred schools. Nearly half of the district's students receive free and reduced lunch (Rice et al., 2009) District administrators interviewed for this dissertation speculated that the actual numbers may be higher, but high school students notoriously fail to turn in the appropriate forms.

The general community does not perceive PGCPS as a high achieving district in part because of the number of schools the state considers "in need of improvement" and the visible state interventions in the district to improve student performance (Hernandez, 2007). Historically, PGCPS has a troubled history in education. The district battled with desegregating schools from the 1970s through the 1990s when the court battles stopped –

largely because the district by then had become a predominantly African-American district and desegregation was virtually unattainable without altering district boundaries (Johnson, 2002). In 2001, because of chronic issues of low student achievement, MSDE replaced the elected school board with state-appointees for a five-year period. Due to consistently not reaching district Adequate Yearly Progress under NCLB, in 2006, Maryland's State Superintendent placed the district under "corrective action." In 2007, 68 of the district's schools were in the Maryland school improvement continuum. Although 17 schools exited school improvement in the 2006-2007 school year, other schools entered school improvement and PGCPS remained under pressure by the state and federal government to improve student achievement during the 2007-2008 school year because of the high number of schools still recognized as "in need of improvement" (Hernandez, 2007).

Historically, PGCPS has had a chronic problem filling its teacher staffing vacancies each year. For the 2007-08 school year, the district had 1300 vacancies; they filled over a third of these vacancies with provisionally certified teachers⁵ (Maryland Teacher Staffing Report, 2006-2008) and 200 of them with teachers pursuing an RTC. Classrooms that did not have a certified teacher were typically staffed with substitute teachers (Chick, 2007) leaving the district's students with uncertified teachers to teach children.

Between 1999 and 2008, PGCPS had five different superintendents⁶ and moved from an elected to an appointed and then back to an elected Board of Education. This constant upheaval in leadership directly affected the operation and governance of the

⁵ PGCPS still had more than 300 teacher vacancies beginning the 2006-07 school year and 200 starting the 2007-08 school year.

⁶ An interim superintendent was appointed in November of the 2008-2009 school year.

school improvement process and the central office (Hernandez, 2007). For example, according to a *Washington Post* account, the Human Resources Department was seen as so “dysfunctional” that in 2007 the newly appointed superintendent reconstituted the entire department (Hernandez, 2007).

Although PGCPs does not have an official policy regarding the use of the resident teacher certificate, district documents do cite alternative programs as a strategy to produce highly qualified and certified teachers (Maryland Bridge to Excellence Master Plan⁷, 2007). Between 1999 and 2008, PGCPs had eleven resident teacher, or MAAPP programs, including for-profit, not-for-profit, Institution of Higher Education (IHE), and district-run programs.

Summary

Focusing this research on Montgomery and Prince George’s County Public Schools was a deliberate decision. The two districts are in the same “metropolitan D.C.” suburban area and are comparable in size; therefore, they both exist amidst the same regional realities (e.g., local job market, regional transitory tendencies) that may be at play. Studying districts that operate within the same region allows a more concentrated focus on district factors that may vary at the district level as districts develop and implement policy. The similarities and differences of these two districts that must abide by many of the same policies and regional realities provided a rich opportunity for the local contextual factors impacting alternative teacher preparation development and implementation to become visible.

⁷ Every Maryland district must submit a five year comprehensive district-wide improvement plan in order to receive additional state funding in response to district equity funding issues studied in the Maryland Thornton Commission.

Data Collection and Methods

This section includes a description of data sources and procedures for data collection and analysis. It ends with a discussion of strengths and limitations of this research approach.

Overview of Data Sources

Data sources for this case study included documents, meeting observations, and in-person interviews. Some programs had more documentation chronicling their development and implementation than others; therefore, the depth of program descriptions in each case varied.

I determined documents to be classified as “data” for this study when the documents granted insight into the programs as well as their contexts. I reviewed the documents to identify the actors making decisions about alternative programs, the stated goals and proposed outcomes of programs and the program development and implementation patterns. I also analyzed documents to corroborate information gleaned from other observations and interviews.

I officially observed meetings in PGCPS. The purpose in attending these meetings was to better understand the relationship between stakeholders and observe their interactions, and roles within the program and the district. This information was then used to secure interviews and broach interview conversations. PGCPS employed the researcher from fall 2007 to spring 2008 to collect data about PGCPS Resident Teacher programs. A district official requested that the researcher conduct focus groups in PGCPS with selected mentors and resident teachers and assisted in granting access to these

groups. The researcher was not affiliated with MCPS and therefore had to operate more independently to gain access to relevant stakeholders for interviews.

In both districts, I chose study participants on the basis of their formal position in the district, involvement in RTC programs, and willingness to participate in the study. All interviews included open-ended questions about each program's design and implementation; the district level interviews also included conversations about teacher staffing and the mechanisms the districts used to recruit teachers. I relied heavily on interviews and the recollections of study participants to recount the planning and history of programs because very little documented information existed about programs. I created interview protocols for district officials, program officials, and focus group participants prior to the interviews, but altered questions slightly depending on the study participant's role in district alternative preparation programs (see Appendix A for interview protocols).

Informed Consent and Confidentiality

All study participants signed an informed consent form approved by the University of Maryland Institutional Review Board. The consent form included descriptions of the purpose of the research, the tasks involved in participation, the minimal risks of participating in the study, the benefits of the research, the voluntary nature of participation in this study, the researcher's contact information, and a statement of age and subject consent with a required signature. Although the researcher included quotations from study participants in this study, study participants are not identified by name as the source of the quotation. To protect study participant confidentiality the researcher used more generic phrases like district official, program implementer, mentor

and teacher. Where quotations may threaten anonymity, the researcher attributed quotations to study participants. Unless otherwise noted, all quotations came from interviews with study participants.

Montgomery County Public Schools Alternative Preparation Programs

For the MCPS case, I focused on the four programs utilizing the RTC or those programs that had an RTC connection at some point in their history; MCPS operated other initial teacher preparation programs, but these four were the only ones affiliated with the RTC in some way. Program level data included eight individual interviews with program owners or mentors, four websites, three packets of program recruitment materials, and eight program design documents provided by study participants. District level data included five individual interviews with district program implementers and leaders, the district website, and five district policy documents shared by study participants. I collected all MCPS data between February and April 2008. My role in data collection was as a transient observer (Murphy, 1980). As an outsider, I completed interviews and briefed study participants about the purpose of the study and use of research.

Prince George's County Public Schools Alternative Preparation Programs

For the PGCPs case, I included all eleven of the PGCPs RTC programs from 1999-2008 in this study. Program level data included fifteen individual interviews with program implementers, four focus group interviews with nineteen program mentors and six program candidates from the 2007-2008 programs, four program websites, four packets of program recruitment materials, and seven program design documents. District

level data included five individual interviews with district officials, the district web site, six meeting observations, and two district policy documents shared by study participants.

During the 2007-2008 school year, PGCPs employed me to collect data and write a report about the history of alternative teacher preparation in PGCPs (Coffman & Muncey, 2008). With the permission of PGCPs and the University of Maryland, I utilized a portion of that data for this dissertation. I collected all PGCPs data between October 2007 and February 2008. Initially, the researcher's role in data collection was as a transient observer (Murphy, 1980). As an outsider, I observed and completed interviews and focus groups; a district leader briefed potential study participants about the purpose of the study and affirmed these purposes prior to each interview or focus group.

In June 2008, after the completion of all data collection, PGCPs hired me to serve as the Resident Teacher Specialist in PGCPs. In that function, I oversaw the training and mentoring of all PGCPs resident teachers including those enrolled in the programs described in this study. Given my experiences and my employment during the majority of data analysis, I took on the role of the "skeptical analyst" (Murphy, 1980). According to Murphy (1980), the skeptical analyst "challenges what [we] see, hear, and read" (p. 69). Given my oversight of PGCPs MAAPP programs during data analysis, it was necessary to constantly question the data and emerging themes to be sure that my involvement in the programs' development and implementation after data collection did not cloud the data analysis process. My work experience in PGCPs meant that I could no longer view PGCPs and MCPS data in the same "equal" light. I had become an insider of sorts in PGCPs. Consequently, my portrayal of PGCPs programs and policy context was generally deeper and more nuanced than my descriptions of MCPS programs and policy

context. This somewhat unequal treatment was impossible to avoid. That said, I took specific steps to enhance the reliability and validity of the study's findings.

Data Analysis

While preliminary data analysis occurred during data collection, the majority of data analysis occurred after the collection of all data. I completed three cycles of data analyses of the PGCPs data and two of the MCPS data. The review of the PGCPs data occurred first in order to complete the PGCPs funded report (Coffman & Muncey, 2008). I transcribed all the interviews and coded the data using the program features categories described in the conceptual framework detailed in Chapter 2. During this initial analysis I assumed that in order to determine district factors I must first identify the proposed and implemented tenets of programs; therefore I initially focused on program descriptions rather than on the district factors involved in program development and implementation

For the second analysis, I recoded all the program features categories using the conceptual framework codes to check the accuracy of earlier coding and included the program documents in this round of coding. I then coded the PGCPs interviews and documents using the district level conceptual framework codes. These conceptual codes, both at the program and district levels, aided in categorizing and organizing the data around the program features and district factors the literature suggested were important. As I went through this process, I began to use emergent codes to record themes and factors that were important and relevant to my research questions but that were not a part of my original conceptual framework.

As I completed the first round of coding, I recognized an omission in dissertation's proposed program features framework and a conceptual flaw in the district

framework. I did not have a category that considered the outcomes of alternative programs; I had originally collapsed the concepts of teacher retention and student achievement into other aspects of the program features framework. Therefore, I created a category entitled “program outcomes” that included the impact of programs on teacher retention and student achievement. I also realized at this step in the process that I had not systematically considered each program’s theory of action and subsequently created theory of action as an explicit, analytic category.

The district framework flaw proved more difficult to remedy than the program features framework. I initially used Spillane’s (1998) concepts of capacity (human, fiscal, and social) to distill district capacity dimensions. This construction, however, did not provide a palpable mechanism to describe the organizational, structural, and communicative factors at play in the district policy context. I had already begun to code the MCPS data prior to this realization, so I stopped and started over utilizing a general district organization/capacity code. At the completion of all district level data analysis, I focused on organizing emergent themes within this analytic category.

I began recoding the MCPS data with the revised categories (program outcomes and district organization/capacity) during the third cycle of data analysis. I then analyzed the coded data for recurring emergent themes. I identified the emergent themes and then scoured the data for repeating codes and corroborating and disconfirming evidence to see if the new themes merited attention. After completing this analysis and drafting the MCPS case, I then recoded the PGCPs data using the edited conceptual frameworks and scoured for emergent themes the same way as I had with the MCPS case. The multiple

codings and analyses allowed me to reflect on findings and to tighten the frameworks before beginning the cross-case analysis.

In terms of individual cases, I examined the program features themes and findings of each case and considered the program similarities and differences. I edited each case's language and structure for consistency. Then, I considered the similarities and differences across the overlapping factors and district contexts and edited the cases to ensure parallel structure of evidence and emerging themes. This process identified similar as well as contradictory themes across the districts and yielded the cross-case chapter.

Several researchers have identified strategies to combat threats to validity and reliability (e.g., Merriam, 1998; Yin, 2003). I utilized triangulation, member check, and peer examination. When I considered the emergent themes, as a skeptical analyst (Murphy, 1980) I questioned assumptions, sought confirming and disaffirming evidence, and constructed lines of logical argument to identify potential gaps in the argument as Weiss (1998) suggests in program evaluation.

In addition, I had the MSDE MAAPP Coordinator and individuals in both MCPS and PGCPs check data interpretations. In MCPS, the reviewers identified a few errors in program descriptions, but affirmed the tentative interpretations of study data. I sought out more individuals in PGCPs to serve as peer reviewers due to the sheer number of programs involved. In PGCPs, the comments of the eight reviewers depended on their roles within the district. Some reviewers identified a few errors in program descriptions; several reviewers were upset about some of the findings because I identified deficiencies in program operation and implementation. I went back to the corroborating data and systematically considered the issues of the reviewers and made adjustments as the data

warranted. For example, in an early draft I stated that the district-run Prince George's County Resident Teacher (PGCRT) program based their training curriculum on the work of the Sylvan program rather than on district priorities. Two reviewers stated that the PGCRT program used The New Teacher Project (TNTP) curriculum and not the Sylvan program. When I went back through program documents, the topics covered and activities in the PGCRT program did indeed align with portions of TNTP's curriculum, but other training sessions contained aspects of Sylvan's curriculum and none of the sessions covered PGCPs curriculum materials. I altered the program descriptions to reflect PGCRT's use of both Sylvan and TNTP training materials as well as the lack of PGCPs curriculum materials in candidate training.

Strengths and Limitations

As a cross-case study, the purpose of this study was to better understand the contextual factors, particularly the district-level factors, which influence the development and implementation of alternative teacher preparation programs. The conceptual framework I developed provided a systematic method to generate descriptions of programs necessary to complete an analysis of the factors influencing program and policy development and implementation. Despite the careful construction of this study, I recognize the study has limitations.

First, the study's program descriptions contain uneven data in terms of quality and quantity of information. I was unable to address every dimension of the program feature conceptual framework for every program due to an absence of data on several programs. Most program leaders did not have documented accounts of implementation. Although some of the current program leaders had data about participants currently enrolled in

programs, program leaders did not consistently collect data on teacher retention or the relationship between program graduates and student achievement. Consequently, length and depth of program descriptions varied within the cases. While I collected some information about the pre-2007 programs from individuals still working with the district or from study participants who had been involved in these programs in some way, I chose to spend my time actively pursuing data about programs still in operation rather than short-lived programs. Many of the individuals involved in these other programs were no longer employees of the districts or were no longer affiliated with an external provider. Both the lack of documentation and the reliance on study participant memories resulted in an uneven data set for some programs.

Second, as an exploratory case study, this study's characterizations are of alternative preparation programs and policies in two districts at a specific point in time; the case studies only capture the development and implementation of programs until spring 2008. This study is not an evaluation of programs, but a description of programs and an analysis of factors involved in the development and implementation of alternative preparation programs.

Third, the study's proposed conceptual framework is an orienting framework rather than a tested theory. While this study is an important point of departure given the alternative preparation literature base, this study does not provide generalizable characterizations of programs outside of the Maryland context.

Despite these limitations, this study contributes to the under-researched field of alternative teacher preparation. The cross-case analysis of two districts in the same state context with quite different experiences in the teacher labor market provided an

opportunity to identify other district factors involved in the development and implementation of programs.

This study addresses a gap in the alternative preparation literature by proposing and applying a conceptual framework to understand the development and implementation of alternative preparation programs. It begins to fill a void in the current literature by including policy context (e.g., profile of district leadership, district organization/capacity) factors and program features (e.g., the relationship between program completers and student achievement) not systematically included in prior alternative teacher preparation program descriptions and research.

Chapter Four: The Case of Montgomery County Public Schools

Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) has utilized alternative teacher preparation programs sparingly over the years. This case considers the development and implementation of these programs by describing a) the central features of programs as first conceived, b) how program features may have been modified during implementation, c) how district factors may have influenced the development and implementation of programs, and d) how the interrelated federal, state, and district factors worked together to shape the features of the district's alternative preparation programs.

Overview of Programs

MCPS does not appear to have an official policy regarding the use of alternative teacher preparation programs, Maryland Approved Alternative Preparation Programs (MAAPP), but seems to value IHE partnerships. An MCPS brochure about higher education partnerships states that the purpose of these partnerships is:

To provide candidates seeking employment in the Montgomery County Public Schools and MCPS staff, both support and professional, with opportunities to further their education, extend their professional skills, and improve their capability to meet system-wide priorities...to provide professional development programs that align with MCPS goals and meet Board of Education priorities (MCPS, 2007)

During the 2007-2008 school year, MCPS had a total of 25 institution of higher education (IHE) partnerships: eleven teacher preparation/certification partnerships, eight career enhancement programs (e.g, advanced teacher certification), and six leadership enhancement programs.

The purpose of this section is to describe the original aims of program features and to identify aspects of program alterations during implementation. This section includes a description of MCPS's alternative preparation programs and RTC-related initial teacher certification IHE programs from 2000 to 2008. The program descriptions are organized around the major sections of the program framework – program operation, entry process and recruitment, training components, implementation, theory of action, program outcomes. The program descriptions are largely based on the memories and experiences of study participants due to little formal documentation about the programs. The program framework includes a more complete definition of program outcomes than those addressed in the findings. None of the program descriptions include rich data about program outcomes. Neither the district officials nor the program staff could provide systematic data regarding the impact of programs on teacher recruitment, retention, or on student achievement. District officials could identify whether teachers remained in the system, but district data bases at the time of data collection did not keep track of how teachers completed their teacher education (baccalaureate vs. post-baccalaureate) or what impact the teachers prepared in different programs had on student achievement.

Although the subject of this dissertation is MAAPPs, it seems important to recognize that MCPS had a number of IHE partnerships that did not use the Resident Teacher Certificate (RTC) but which had a targeted recruitment population and training features similar to MAAPP programs; in fact, one of these programs, the University of Maryland's MCERT program, was considered a MAAPP in PGCPs, but not in MCPS. This policy distinction is important because of how both districts utilized the RTC. During the 2007-2008 school year, MCPS had seven IHE partnership programs for initial

teacher certification; six of these programs required a bachelor's degree for entry. Recruitment focused on career changers or uncertified individuals (paraeducators, substitutes, and support staff) already working in MCPS, but only one of these programs was an official MAAPP. This dissertation includes four program descriptions including the one official MAAPP and three other RTC-related programs. For consistency, each program description considers intended program features and then notes modifications made during implementation and known program outcomes up to the 2007-2008 school year.

Training Teachers for Tomorrow, Montgomery County Public Schools, (2000-2003)

The Training Teachers for Tomorrow (TTT) program began in 2000 as an MCPS experiment to certify secondary teachers in high need subject areas. As the TTT program design document (no date) states, "Some of the secondary teachers we hire are highly qualified in their academic fields, sometimes possessing years of professional experience and advanced degrees, but not pedagogical training." Program documents state that the program intended to provide competency-based, MCPS-specific pedagogical training for "new, uncertified, secondary teachers...to meet their immediate needs" as classroom teachers (TTT document, no date).

Program Operation. TTT candidates committed to a two-year training process overseen by the Office of Human Resources. MCPS completely funded the program and required the participating teachers to make a three-year commitment to teach in the district to repay this investment. I obtained no data related to program cost.

Entry Process. Planning documents state that potential candidates had to possess the required content courses to be eligible for a Maryland certificate, hold at least a 3.0

average in their major area of study, and be hired by MCPS to fill critical secondary subject need areas. Study participants stated that the program focused recruitment on individuals MCPS personnel selected for employment but who needed official certification. According to one study participant, “What they would do is take that pool of new applicants that we would normally make conditionally certified and they took that group...they’d take that group and say, this group needs 21 credits because they’d be content certified in Biology or whatever...” Therefore, TTT recruitment and selection do not appear to have been separated from regular MCPS recruitment and selection; potential TTT candidates were only to be drawn from high need certification areas where MCPS would have hired conditionally certified teachers.

Training Components. The TTT training program focused on the “emerging needs of the new teacher and addressed topics as they become relevant in the new teacher’s classroom” (MCPS TTT Planning document, no date). TTT teachers had to complete seven modules taught by MCPS personnel over two years. The modules included training on adolescent development, human learning, teaching methodology, inclusion of special needs student populations, assessment of students, methods of teaching, and reading in the content areas. At the end of two years, each teacher had to have completed 315 clock hours of coursework or 21 semester hours of study.

According to the program design document, the uncertified MCPS professionals involved in the initial program focus group stated that “as business professionals, they were accustomed to long hours of training, weekends included, where specific skills were developed; and accustomed also to the expectation that those skills would be implemented upon their return to work.” Program designers incorporated these focus

group comments into the program design. The initial summer course met all-day for several days prior to the beginning of the school year; the rest of the required sessions occurred in after-school and Saturday sessions over a two-year period.

TTT teachers did not have an internship experience, but as a study participant noted, they “learned on the job” with support from TTT program personnel and school mentors. The candidates began their MCPS employment as provisional teachers. After they completed the required 135 hours for the RTC, the teachers transferred from provisional to resident teacher certificate status. The TTT program integrated the existing MCPS first-year teacher mentoring program into the TTT program model by assigning certified, currently-teaching, school-based teachers to be candidate mentors.

Implementation. Based on interview data, program operation and training resembled the initial policy documents; however, program leaders altered program entry requirements and recruitment strategies. Study participants indicated that although the program was not designed to include Trades and Industry candidates (individuals hired based on occupational experience rather than their degree earned), these candidates gained program entrance to increase program numbers. One study participant stated, “The intent was for [candidates] to be critical shortage...there wasn’t anybody intending to do it improperly, but they were being pressured to get people into it to increase the size of the cohort and they just threw everybody in.” Allowing these individuals into the program complicated program approval and management because the RTC program planning did not include this specialized group of candidates; state RTC regulations required candidates to have already earned a bachelor’s degree and none of the MCPS Trade and Industry candidates met that requirement. In the end, MCPS sponsored only

one TTT cohort of 11 teachers because of the state’s unwillingness to bend its rules and give TTT formal program approval. Another district official said, “[W]e could never get the final approval...[a state official] kept saying verbally it was fine, but he’d never put it in writing...so, we finally became discouraged about it and let it go...under the new (RTC) guidelines we might have pursued it, but the financial aspect I think would have precluded it.”

Theory of Action. The TTT’s initial theory of action allowed MCPS personnel to train uncertified, high need subject area teachers hired by MCPS. Rather than rely on individuals or institutions outside MCPS to train teachers, TTT creators strived to use MCPS trainers to certify teachers in order to align training with MCPS values and initiatives. Although MCPS met their purpose of utilizing MCPS trainers, they were neither able to meet recruitment goals nor the terms of the state RTC guidelines that required resident teachers to have an undergraduate degree. Consequently, the state refused to formally approve the program.

Program Outcomes. Retention and student achievement measurement data for this program were not available.

Alternative Certification for Effective Teachers, Montgomery College (2006-present)

The Montgomery College (MC) Alternative Certification for Effective Teachers (ACET) program began in 2006 as a pilot MSDE MAAPP program. The partnership program between Montgomery College and MCPS was designed as an “innovative teacher preparation program for talented individuals who wish to become teachers in MCPS secondary schools” (ACET program documents, 2007). The purpose of the program was to target uncertified MCPS staff (i.e., uncertified teachers,

paraprofessionals, substitutes) as well as college-educated individuals in Montgomery County who wanted to become certified teachers in a high-need certification area (as identified by MCPS), but did not need (or want) a master's degree or need (or want) to be tied indefinitely to MCPS.

Program Operation. In the spring 2006, Montgomery College approached MCPS to write a MSDE proposal to obtain grant funds for a MAAPP program. One MCPS official stated that they were “a little reluctant” about RTC programs at that point, but because the program would come at no cost to MCPS because of grant funding the county agreed to the pilot grant program. According to study participants, Montgomery College officials had tried multiple times to begin teacher training program relationships with MCPS, but it wasn't until this grant opportunity that MCPS agreed. Between 2006 and 2008, the ACET program operated three cohorts; the first cohort trained and completed its internship during the summer; the subsequent cohorts began training in January and completed their internships by May.

The ACET program employs a Montgomery College coordinator, two faculty members, and a few internship supervisors who visit ACET candidates during their spring internship. Both MCPS Offices of Human Resources and Organizational Development work with the ACET program in different capacities. Human Resources participates in the initial candidate interviews for selection and also assists candidates in finding employment while Organizational Development identifies schools in which candidates complete their internships.

ACET candidates pay tuition to Montgomery College but do not receive assistance or tuition reimbursement from MCPS. Montgomery College operates the

program through its non-credit bearing continuing education division that allows the organization to charge candidates for the time spent in MCPS classrooms. Montgomery College uses ACET candidate tuition dollars to pay for MC instructors and to fund operations; a certain percentage of the tuition is paid to MCPS to cover central office time and to pay the MCPS teachers serving as internship supervisors for ACET candidates. Because candidates pay for their own tuition, after ACET candidates have successfully met all program requirements and advance to their Standard Professional Certificate, they are not bound to teach in MCPS.

Entry Process. To be admitted, candidates must meet the minimum MAAPP GPA (2.75) and Praxis testing requirements, as well as be approved by a joint Montgomery College/MCPS interview panel. According to study participants, the program tried to identify the “cream of the crop because it’s such a fast program and participants have to take in so much information and process it and learn how to apply it so quickly, that they have to be pretty stellar individuals to be able to handle it.” According to study participants, the 2008 cohort had 40 applicants; interviewed 31 and invited 15 into the program; 11 continued into the internship.

In interviews with two MC stakeholders, the capacity to teach diverse students came up as a significant reason for denying candidates admission. One of the study participants identified a lack of understanding of diversity issues as a major reason candidates were not invited into the program.

...one of the biggest reasons that we did not invite people is that in the questions regarding diversity issues, it is clear that they don’t have an understanding of what it means to work with students of all cultures and all races...just in things they say...they use phrases like, ‘well those kids’...you can’t change people fast enough in this program to do that.

Due to the fast nature of the program, program leaders opted to select candidates who already held dispositions valued in MCPS.

Training Components. Participants in the first cohort had to complete training modules and the internship over the summer so they could begin the school-year as the teacher of record. The training curriculum consisted of seven modules that included human development, learning theories, secondary methods, secondary assessments, diversity, students with exceptionalities, and collaboration and communication. ACET candidates observed and taught during the four and a half hour summer school day and then spent the rest of the day in coursework.

ACET program teachers taught full-time during their residency year and finished two additional training modules, attended evening seminars, and completed an action research project. At the request of MCPS, the ACET program participated in the MCPS 1st year, school-based teacher mentoring program; therefore, ACET did not provide mentoring during candidates' first year of teaching, but the school district did.

Implementation. The ACET training program varied greatly from its first cohort beginning in summer 2006 to its third in winter 2008. After the first summer, program leaders recognized that the summer model was not ideal for the ACET candidates. They were concerned about the quality of the summer school cooperating teachers, the differences between a summer school and school-year classroom, and the pacing of coursework. According to program managers, candidates reported feeling overwhelmed during the school year and consequently turned in what Montgomery College program leaders labeled "lots of unsatisfactory work."

While still training the first cohort, the ACET program transitioned to a different model. Rather than offering the training and internship during the summer, program leaders opted to offer the program training modules during the fall and spring. This schedule allowed candidates to complete the majority of their training and internship before the summer and before becoming a full-time teacher of record. Cohorts two and three had courses twice a week during the evening and all day Saturdays through February and March. In late March or early April, depending on the MCPS schedule, ACET candidates participated in a four-week internship. The candidates were paired with MCPS teachers, observed classes for one week, and taught five classes full-time for three weeks. Three MC supervisors visited each teacher candidate a minimum of twice a week and completed three formal evaluations. Prior to the internship, candidates completed a professional development plan and set objectives for themselves for the internship. During the internship, candidates collected data about how they were meeting internship goals and constructed their MCPS teacher portfolios.

After the successful completion of the internship, ACET candidates were eligible for their RTC. Candidates entered the MCPS hiring pool as any other new teacher applicant and interviewed with principals over the summer to secure positions. During the residency, the teachers regularly met for a teacher support seminar in the fall and worked on action research projects during the spring.

Theory of Action. ACET met its initial purpose for MC to train and certify individuals seeking teacher certification in high need subject areas to train and work in MCPS at no cost to the district. ACET's theory of action concerning the timing of resident teacher preparation changed during implementation. Rather than completing the

pre-employment and internship training over the summer, ACET's altered theory of action suggested that by candidates completing training modules and the internship during the regular school-year and before they began teaching full-time, the quality of the training experience would increase and candidates would not be as stressed.

Program Outcomes. Although the ACET program training structure changed after the first cohort, the intent to train individuals to be teachers for high need MCPS certification areas at the candidates' own cost remained unchanged. MCPS study participants stated that they would like to grow the program and their MC counterparts agreed, but both partners recognized the challenges in program expansion. Study participants mentioned the high cost of the program for candidates several times as a prohibitive factor in increasing the number of individuals in a cohort. One program stakeholder stated,

I think the fact that the program is a high cost program means that it becomes just one of other choices, as opposed to the obvious choice for people...I tell them about Prince George's and D.C. and Teach for America. I tell them about Baltimore and the New Teacher Project. And I say, you can go through any of those [programs], apply, and it won't cost you a dime. And you might get a stipend in some cases. But they have to leave Montgomery County to do that.

Study participants considered cost a prohibitive factor for program expansion, but they reported that potential program candidates did not want to leave Montgomery County and seemed willing to pay the tuition. If MCPS wanted the program to expand, then in order to attract more candidates some other financial incentive might have to be offered. MC study participants stated that if the cohort numbers increased, they would also have to increase tuition to hire additional personnel which would further exacerbate the cost issue for candidates. Of the three cohorts of individuals who completed the program as of 2008, only two graduates left for personal reasons.

Program Immersion Program, Johns Hopkins University, (2000-present)

The Program Immersion Program (ProMAT) is a two-year, 45 credit master's degree program for career changers to earn certification in a high needs subject area as identified by MCPS. Candidates serve as full-time long-term substitutes in a MCPS classroom while they take coursework.

Program Operation. According to study participants, ProMAT began “on a cocktail napkin.” The designers included a MCPS HR employee and faculty from JHU who had once been MCPS administrators. Candidates were paid at a long-term substitute rate. They did not receive any health benefits, but MCPS paid for the majority of their course credits if they agreed to work in MCPS for three years. Initially the candidates taught under the RTC, but when the MSDE guidelines changed in 2007 and required an internship, JHU dropped the RTC designation. The program also partnered with the Baltimore City Teaching Fellows – The New Teacher Project for certain coursework. The Fellows could then opt into the JHU master's program if they choose.

Study participants stated that one of the advantages of the program was that it was cost neutral. By hiring the teachers as uncertified, long-term substitutes, MCPS reallocated money from salaries they would have had to pay certified teachers to pay for tuition and JHU program operation. As one district official stated,

...let's just say for numbers sake, you've budgeted for this given English position in Montgomery County \$50,000 cause that's starting plus eight or nine thousand dollars for benefits...and [JHU candidates] don't get benefits... You bring in someone who's making \$28-29,000, you've got a \$20,000 differential. That money is applied to their tuition and to their supervision and for running the program.

Entry Process. Program admission required a bachelor's degree, state-required content coursework, a passing score on the Praxis I exam, and a 3.0 undergraduate GPA.

Prior to beginning ProMAT, a candidate had to teach as a substitute teacher in MCPS and receive a positive principal recommendation (ProMAT program documents, 2007).

Candidates had to submit all qualifying paperwork to the ProMAT office and respond to two essay questions: “Why do you want to teach?” and “Why will the Montgomery ProMAT program help you achieve your teaching goals?” After program staff evaluated candidates’ initial admission documents to JHU, a joint JHU/MCPS panel interviewed them for acceptance based on MCPS subject-specific teacher needs (ProMAT program documents, 2007).

Program study participants stated that most candidates were career-changers from the D.C. region.

...most of them are career changers. We get a few people coming out of college...but that’s not much, maybe 3-4 every year...We are definitely looking for women in nontraditional roles [e.g., women in mathematics] or men in any role...we’re also looking for diversity, racial and ethnic...

ProMAT sought individuals in areas that MCPS identified as critical subject area needs. When the program first began, the cohort size was around 45 people; by 2008 the cohort size was 17.

Training Components. During the first summer, candidates took six credit hours during the evenings and participated in running a summer program for MCPS students in coordination with JHU’s professional development schools. Over the next two years, candidates took nine credits during the fall and spring semesters and three credits the second summer for a total of 45 credits. JHU offered classes during the evenings and some weekends. Professors and/or adjuncts taught all coursework; these instructors were typically former MCPS teachers and administrators.

After the summer, a candidate became full-time, long-term substitute teachers in MCPS. JHU hired university supervisors to mentor candidates once a week during their first year of teaching and to be available, as needed during the second year to assist candidates with any classroom difficulties. JHU also supplied money for a school-based mentor who served as a school-based contact and “intern coach” for the candidate. One study participant stated,

We pay for somebody on the staff that the principal appoints to be their mentor. We call them the intern coach. And that person’s on staff in their department, in their subject area. So if I’m a biology teacher I go to whoever this person is and I can have free access to this person if I want. Ask about lesson planning. What I want to ask about this kid who’s giving me fits, there’s somebody there on staff.

Candidates have access to both school-level mentors and program-level supervisors during their year of teaching.

Implementation. Since its inception the training program has remained largely unaltered, but the program discontinued the use of the RTC. After the implementation of the 2007 MAAPP guidelines, ProMAT candidates were no longer eligible for the RTC because they did not meet state internship guidelines; candidates did not participate in a supervised internship prior to beginning their full-time teaching as required by the state. In addition, MCPS would have been required by state regulation to pay ProMAT teachers as full-time, certified teachers with benefits and the district was not willing to do this and pay for their tuition.

Theory of Action. MCPS and JHU drafted ProMAT together in order to train and certify individuals in high need subject areas and utilize current and former MCPS personnel for instruction. ProMAT’s theory of action appears to have been to train teachers at JHU with former MCPS personnel at no additional cost to the district in order

to instill MCPS values and traditions into the curriculum. This theory of action appears to have remained largely intact as evidenced by the program leadership and instructors, the majority of whom were former MCPS administrators and teachers.

Program Outcomes. Program study participants stated the number of candidates in the last several cohorts declined steadily. The 2007 cohort started with 25 people and as of the spring 2008 was down to 17. According to study participants, historically, about 80% of ProMAT program completers remained in teaching in MCPS.

Master's Certification Program, University of Maryland, (2002-present)

Although the University of Maryland/MCPS partnership, Master's Certification (MCERT) did not operate under a MAAPP RTC model during the 2007-2008 school year, the same program did in Prince George's County Public Schools. Therefore, it seems relevant to include a description of program features in the MCPS case study.

According to the University of Maryland Master's Certification (MCERT) program website, MCERT targets "non-certified teachers and current MCPS employees with a bachelor's degree who are not certified" (Retrieved on May 4, 2010 from www.education.umd.edu/EDCI/MCERT). After one year as either a "paid" or "unpaid" intern, in MCPS, MCERT candidates earn a Master's degree in education and become eligible for Maryland certification.

Program Operation. The MCERT program at the University of Maryland has existed in some form in MCPS since the late 1980s; the current paid internship iteration has been operating since the early 2000s. Unpaid interns "apprentice" with a mentor teacher for an entire school year much like a traditional undergraduate education major engaged in student teaching. Candidates interested in an MCPS paid internship must be seeking certification in a MCPS identified high needs subject area, and must interview

with the district. Paid interns serve as half-time, long-term substitutes in a MCPS classroom; typically, two MCERT candidates job share one position. Since MCPS pays a portion of their tuition, candidates are then obligated to stay in MCPS for three years. MCPS allocated the number and types of paid interns they would support and guided candidates through the hiring process, but did not participate in program operation in any other way.

Entry Process. Candidates must possess a bachelor's degree and a 3.0 undergraduate GPA in the content area they wish to teach, and they must be accepted into the UMCP graduate school. MCERT candidates teaching in MCPS do not have to pass Praxis II before they begin teaching. Candidates who meet these entry requirements are then interviewed by a panel of UMCP College of Education faculty that may include a UMCP faculty, PDS/content area coordinators(s) and one of the subject area UMCP coordinators. If MCERT accepts a candidate into the program, then the individual may intern in MCPS, PGCPS, or Howard County Public Schools as a paid or unpaid intern; interns opting for a paid internship must interview with the school district.

Training Components. The MCPS MCERT candidate training is identical to the PGCPS MCERT training; candidates are in the same off-campus graduate courses focused on content pedagogy, adolescent development, diversity, reading, and action research. A Candidate works half-time as a long-term substitute and is mentored by a teacher working in their building, as well as a university supervisor. MCPS MCERT paid interns use their entire year of teaching as their "internship" even though they are the teacher-of-record; program leaders still refer to them as interns during this time period even though technically they are not apprenticing with another teacher in their classroom.

Implementation. Initially, MCERT relied on the unpaid internship model. Program leaders later convinced MCPS that the paid internship model was “cost neutral.” That is, the program model could train teachers in high need subject areas and require a commitment to remain in MCPS. For the most part, the rest of program implementation occurred as it had been developed.

Theory of Action. MCERT’s purpose was to target uncertified individuals to become teachers in either unpaid or paid internships in MCPS and train them using the MCERT coursework model. MCERT’s theory of action appeared to suggest the importance of a long-term internship model (one year) coupled with coursework and mentoring that might help students integrate practice and theory.

Program Outcomes. MCERT recruits and attracts candidates in specific certification areas identified by MCPS. The data do not provide further information about the kinds of candidates who apply and complete the program. No one from the partnership could provide firm retention numbers, but program study participants stated that “retention was high.”

Program Features Findings Across Programs

The purpose of this section is to analyze features across programs. Even though only one of the MCPS programs was an official MAAPP during the 2007-2008 school year, comparisons may be made across programs.

Program Operation

Two notable similarities and one major difference emerged in the descriptions of program operation. First, the programs had similar oversight relationships with MCPS; the IHEs recruited candidates and provided coursework; MCPS participated in the

interviewing and placement of candidates. The IHEs relied on their pre-existing teacher education department structures to implement programs. Program leaders appeared to rely primarily on the Office of Human Resources as their first point-of-contact within MCPS.

Second, the study data indicate that MCPS required programs be cost neutral or zero cost to the district. Rather than paying the JHU and UMCP candidates a full-time salary, MCPS paid the candidates as long-term substitutes and subsidized a portion of their tuition costs. According to MCPS, the salary and tuition costs expended on these candidates roughly equaled the cost of recruiting and training one fully certified teacher. The Montgomery College program was completely funded through student tuition dollars. As a result of these funding differences, candidates in the JHU and UMCP programs promised to stay in MCPS for at least three years while Montgomery College candidates were essentially free agents who could move wherever and whenever they choose without penalty.

Third, the length and timing of training differed across the programs. The JHU and UMCP programs were one and two-year training commitments that resulted in a master's degree; both programs followed the traditional IHE academic schedule. Candidates in the MC program had four months of training and an internship during the winter and spring before they began searching for teaching positions with other new teacher candidates. Because the MC teachers had to meet MAAPP RTC requirements, they began the school year as both highly qualified and certified teachers while the JHU and UMCP candidates were uncertified, long-term substitutes.

Entry Process

All programs possessed similar recruitment and entry processes for candidates. First, all programs had minimum qualifications for program entry. All programs required a bachelor's degree and an entry interview involving staff from MCPS's Office of Human Resources. MC required a 2.75 undergraduate GPA in specific subject-area coursework and the four-year universities require a cumulative 3.0 undergraduate GPA.

Second, the entry process for programs seemed similar. Program representatives from the IHE and at least one representative from the MCPS Office of Human Resources participated in the interviewing process. Each program used standard MCPS interviewing questions and rating protocols. The acceptance decision was ultimately made by MCPS; if the MCPS Human Resources representative did not rate the candidate highly, they were not admitted into programs. All of the RTC-related programs selected candidates in this way.

Third, the programs had similar recruitment targets (career changers, recent college grads) and employed similar recruitment strategies. The MC program was slightly different because program leaders sought individuals who already had a master's degree while the JHU and UMCP programs offered the master's degree as part of the teacher certification coursework. All three programs relied on traditional, local recruitment mechanisms (e.g., websites, newspapers, information sessions) to recruit candidates seeking certification in MCPS high need subject areas (e.g., math, science).

Training Components

The program training components varied in terms of intensity, structure, and mentoring while the content of the required coursework was fairly similar. First, programs differed in the intensity of training. By intensity I mean the amount of material

covered in the amount of time allotted. The MC program required candidates to take seven training modules over a two month period prior to the beginning of their internship and then required teaching seminars, a reading course, and an action research module through the following school-year. The JHU and MCERT programs emphasized credit-bearing coursework spread over an entire year. The MC program was much more intense during the pre-employment training phase of the program than the other IHE programs.

Second, models differed in their structure and conceptualization of the internship and how candidates operated as the teacher-of-record. MC program candidates participated in a four-week, traditional internship model in which they shadowed and taught with another certified teacher-of-record during the spring of the school-year prior to their full-time teaching. JHU candidates served as the full-time long-term substitute teacher-of-record beginning on the first day of school; they did not have an internship experience prior to the beginning of the school year, but served as a substitute teacher prior to admission to the program. UMCP candidates served as a half-time teacher-of-record; they taught for half the day and spent the rest of the day observing and learning from other teachers in the building. The programs had significant differences in how teachers completed their internships and operated as the teachers-of-record in classrooms.

Third, the use of mentoring varied. MC used a more traditional, student teacher model. During their one-month, school-year internship, candidates worked with a school-based mentor teacher. During their residencies the following year, the MC candidates had a school-based, MCPS first-year teacher mentor program for support. The JHU and UMCP programs had different kinds of supports through university-paid school-based personnel and university supervisors that concentrated on the internship period. Although

all the programs had a mentoring program, its structure during the implementation of the internship varied.

The content of the training programs was fairly similar except that the IHE programs required more courses on content pedagogy. It is important to remember that in order for teachers to be eligible for the RTC, even before the regulation changes in 2007, candidates had to have a specific number of training hours. MSDE did not specify what this training should include other than it should be aligned with national teacher education standards (e.g., INTASC, national teacher education content standards). Therefore, programs had a lot of flexibility in program requirements.

After the beginning of the 2007 MAAPP approval process, programs had to document how coursework aligned with standards and also provide evidence of relevant professional development opportunities offered in response to difficulties resident teachers may be having in the classroom. For pre-employment training, the MC and TTT programs used training modules that emphasized classroom management, classroom organization, teaching diverse learners, and lesson planning. The JHU and UMCP programs emphasized credit-bearing coursework during pre-employment training that included teaching diverse learners and content methods. For residency training, the MC and TTT programs held seminars and modules in response to candidate-identified questions and concerns. The JHU and UMCP programs continued through their course outlines and engaged in coursework such as action research, content methods, and adolescent development. Although the structure and intensity of the training varied, these programs all appeared to cover similar topics except that the graduate programs contained more coursework on content pedagogy.

Implementation

All of the programs had some slippage between their initial program purpose and provisions and implementation, but programs differed in the features altered during implementation. The TTT program adapted their recruitment and entry process to include individuals without a bachelor's degree while the ACET program altered the structure of their training program by moving primary training from the summer to the winter. Both ProMAT and MCERT altered their coursework to address some of MCPS's priorities for their K-12 students (e.g., teaching diverse learners), but did not significantly alter recruitment and selection, program operation, or other training components during implementation.

Theory of Action

All of the programs had similar goals – to recruit and train uncertified individuals to teach in high need subject areas in MCPS – but had different theories as to what is important to focus on in alternative preparation and how to package program components. All of the programs' initial provisions called for individuals to pursue certification while they were the teachers-of-record in an MCPS classroom at little, or neutral, cost to MCPS. ACET's theory of action emphasized the value of the school-year internship experience and the importance of candidates completing their pre-employment training prior to the internship. The JHU and MCERT programs' theories of action provided little if any experience in classrooms prior to candidates taking on their role as teachers-of-record in a classroom. These programs utilized credit-based coursework models for candidates to earn certification and a master's degree as well as meet program goals.

Ironically, the ProMAT and MCERT program models at nationally-ranked universities looked more like alternative teacher preparation programs than the ACET program; individuals completed their internships while they were considered the teachers-of-record in the ProMAT and MCERT programs – a hallmark of alternative teacher preparation. The ACET program, the only official MAAPP program, structurally looked more like a “traditional” program with candidates’ internships occurring during the regular school-year prior to their experience as a teacher-of-record. Rather than being a full semester though, the ACET internship occurred over one month. All of the programs aimed to recruit and train teachers in high need subject areas for MCPS and included the same program features, but each program conceptualized how to train teachers and implement program features differently.

Program Outcomes

No data were available for the TTT program. Based on the available data for other programs, it appears that programs had varied success at attracting and retaining teachers. As of the 2007-2008 school year, the three ACET cohorts all had less than 25 candidates. On average, program leaders recommended 15 of these candidates to advance to residency. Of those who completed the residency, only two individuals left teaching. ProMAT program leaders stated that although initial program cohorts were larger, numbers had been steadily decreasing over the last several cohorts; across cohorts, teachers remained in MCPS at a rate of 80%. Conversely, the MCERT program reported increasing enrollment over the last several years, but could not provide retention numbers. The sample of available retention data for the ACET and ProMAT programs suggests a higher retention rate than the national average.

None of the programs could report data on the relationship between their program completers and student achievement. MCPS may have access to these data within their internal district databases, but have strict policy guidelines surrounding the sharing of student achievement data with outside entities. Therefore, I could not determine a relationship between program training, candidates, and student achievement.

Summary

Looking across programs, this analysis supports several cross-cutting observations about the development and implementation of alternative preparation program features in MCPS. Programs operated in fairly similar ways. All programs operated fairly independently from district personnel, but relied on the Office of Human Resources for the hiring and placement of candidates. MCPS required all programs to be cost neutral or at no cost to the district and required candidates to sign a service repayment agreement if MCPS invested any money in their education. The major difference across programs' operation was the length of program training (several months versus years).

The entry process and recruitment mechanisms for candidates were remarkably similar across programs. All programs utilized traditional recruitment methods and sought out recent college graduates and career changers for their programs. Candidate interviews and selection in all programs involved MCPS officials. The only significant difference was the undergraduate GPA requirement for program entry (2.75 versus 3.0).

Although MCPS has only had two programs that utilized the RTC, all the MCPS RTC-related program training components contained similar content areas including training on teaching diverse learners, lesson plans, action research, and pedagogy. The

primary differences in the training content were the sequence and packaging of concepts and the amount of time dedicated to cover the material.

Programs' theory of action all worked toward the same goal – to recruit and train uncertified individuals to teach in high need subject areas in MCPS – but used different combinations of coursework, an internship, and mentoring to achieve their goals. These differences suggest that the programs valued different aspects of training over others.

Lastly, program stakeholders reported that they could say very little about the actual “effectiveness” of programs or the “quality” of program graduates. None of the programs had data available to examine the relationship between program completers and student achievement.

District Factors Shaping Program Feature Implementation

As discussed in chapter two, identifying factors influencing alternative preparation program development and implementation is a slippery slope for several reasons including the interrelated nature of the federal, state, and district policy environment. For that reason, I employed an orienting framework derived from the literature, but remained open to uncovering factors not initially included. While open to unanticipated factors, the data indicate that the factors included in the framework capture the terrain. Each of the following subsections considers the influence of district factors on MCPS programs. Those factors are, with one exception, discussed separately. The politics factor is woven through the discussion of other factors, in part because that is how study participants addressed the notion of “politics.” Study participants would make reference to politics during interviews, but even with prompts would rarely explain or elaborate on who was involved in the political actions or how. As earlier noted, politics

is often treated as the generic, residual explanation for the failure of policy implementation (e.g., Malen, 2006). Although politics was an overarching consideration in this analysis, the available data did not allow a thorough analysis of its impact on the development and implementation of programs. To stay true to the data acquired, information on “politics” is woven through the discussion of other factors.

Local Teacher Labor Market

Although Maryland must import thousands of certified teachers each year, MCPS does not have a problem finding teachers to fill positions. District documents and study participants affirm this fact. One study participant stated,

Their [MCPS] numbers are pretty good...it's kind of a coveted county to work in...there's a prestige associated with them. They run things well and so a lot of people want to work there. So they have a big attitude about it, but in some ways everything keeps working out there because everybody keeps gravitating to work there.

According to study participants, MCPS hiring difficulties focus on specific subject areas including mathematics, science, special education and foreign language. To address these specific hiring challenges, MCPS has a number of IHE partnership programs targeting specific subject areas and career changers. One district leader commented, “[IHE partnerships are] a major recruitment tool for us here in Montgomery...We do a lot of alternative certification programs mainly focusing on second career folks and folks who have maybe the background but they don't have the teaching credentials.” District and program documents indicate that MCPS will only fund candidates pursuing certification in MCPS-identified high need content areas. None of the programs, however, had cohorts of greater than 30 teachers focused on high need areas of mathematics and the sciences.

According to MCPS HR data, 23% of all district new hires in the 2007-2008 school year came from IHE partnership programs. Several study participants expressed concerns about “over hiring” teachers in the coming school years given the downturn in the economy and the abundance of partnership programs; in the 2007-2008 school year, MCPS had over twenty partnership programs, but only one of them was a MAAPP program utilizing the RTC. As indicated through Rice et al.’s (2005) work, MCPS’s ability to meet teacher staffing demands may be partly explained through the high socio-economic status of much of the county and the high teacher application rates. But, due to MCPS’s specific teacher staffing shortages and the inability of Maryland traditional teacher education programs to produce enough teachers for the state’s labor market, MCPS created IHE partnerships to meet their niche teacher certification needs.

Teacher Quality Policies

Federal, state, and district teacher quality policies all shaped the development and implementation of alternative programs. Up to the 2007-2008 school year, MCPS’s teacher quality policies appeared to have been affected, to varying degrees, by federal and state teacher quality guidelines. NCLB provided the impetus to consider alternative preparation in critical shortage areas. Study participants indicated that even though the county steered highly qualified and certified teachers (who were typically experienced and traditionally prepared educators) into their federally funded, Title I schools and therefore met NCLB teacher quality guidelines in these schools without difficulty, NCLB directed attention to the importance of securing an adequate supply of highly qualified teachers in all subject areas. District officials did not place candidates from their RTC-related programs into the Title I schools because they were hired as long-term substitutes

and were not considered highly qualified and certified; candidates from the Montgomery College ACET program could be placed in Title I schools because they taught under the RTC, but district officials indicated that they avoided this action.

Despite district officials' recognition that they did not have to use the RTC to meet federal teacher quality guidelines, study participants stated that a primary reason for embracing the Montgomery College ACET program using the RTC was because program candidates would be considered highly qualified and certified. The following study participants' quotes represent MCPS district officials' views on alternative teacher preparation, the federal push for high qualified teachers, and the use of the RTC in MCPS.

I don't know if we would have ever embraced this [MC's ACET program] as much if it wasn't related to the HQ [highly qualified] thing and the fact that federally it's been pushed so much I think. I mean, I think the feds are basically saying teacher programs, teacher prep programs are no big deal. Anybody can learn how to teach and those of us that came in traditionally maybe think that you need a little more expertise in the teaching field.

The thing that promoted us to start using [the RTC] was the [highly qualified teacher] issue. That's really why we got involved with MC because we knew we would have HQ teachers, plus that we got into a fast track kind of way for these content people to get certified...we were not terribly impressed [with the RTC] initially. We kept saying, 'What do we get out of this?'

Although MCPS was not desperate for highly qualified teachers in general, district officials did appear to recognize the utility of developing the MC partnership focused on producing highly qualified teachers in high need subject areas.

State alternative teacher preparation policies neither constrained nor incentivized the idea of alternative preparation for MCPS. State policies set the basic standards for programs but those policies were not viewed as restrictive; since MCPS did not qualify

for grants to develop alternative preparation programs, the state policy had a modest influence on the development and implementation of programs.

The district's internal teacher quality policies helped the district secure a comparative advantage within the teacher labor market. These case study data support Rice et al.'s (2009) claim that MCPS packages their teacher quality policies in ways that impact teacher recruitment and retention. To address their specific recruitment needs, MCPS paired financial incentives and recruitment strategies into two unofficial policies that influenced the development and implementation of programs. As described above, the district not only used IHE initial teacher certification programs as a primary method to alleviate their targeted shortages, but also required partnership programs to be cost neutral or zero cost to the district. In discussing program funding, one study participant stated that programs had to be,

...zero sum. Cost neutral. For example...[candidates] start at [University of Maryland for example to start their program there as long-term subs. So they're being paid a long-term sub salary, but they get no benefits...The idea is that it costs [MCPS] less to pay for the sub, long-term sub versus paying a teacher there...The money that we save finances their education and sometimes covers their benefits.

In exchange for MCPS paying for part of their tuition, individuals agreed to a "service repayment agreement" that required them to remain in MCPS for a three year period or repay the cost of their training. These unofficial MCPS requirements promoted teacher training at IHEs in high need subject areas so that MCPS continued to meet highly qualified teacher requirements in the federal policy.

Under Montgomery College's ACET MAAPP program, individual candidates rather than MCPS paid tuition to Montgomery College. The College then paid MCPS directly to cover candidate mentor costs and other organizational investments. Study

participants stated that despite candidates being both highly qualified and certified under the RTC, initially Montgomery College had to convince MCPS to accept the program due to the program's abbreviated training model; MCPS officials stated that they preferred IHE programs. As one official said, "It wasn't until this grant opportunity came up...It really pushed it [MC's ACET program] for us." MCPS could not deny the attractiveness of the zero training cost for candidates. Through the majority of the partnership programs, MCPS opted to invest in uncertified, long-term substitutes paid at a lower rate than certified teachers while they earned their certification rather than have resident teachers who must be paid at a certified teacher rate. Leaders were not worried about the impact of these uncertified teachers on their NCLB teacher quality numbers because MCPS met the highly qualified teacher targets in their Title I schools.

MCPS had two primary official retention policies. The first was the New Teacher Induction Program for new and new-to-MCPS teachers. The six-pronged program included information and technology networks, MCPS support, peer support, a mentor program, new educator orientation and staff development. The program was designed to support teachers in the transition into their MCPS classroom (Retrieved on 03/05/2009, from www.montgomeryschools.md.org). MCPS required that all alternative preparation partnership programs utilize this mentoring program for candidates; although the IHEs often had mentoring programs operating through their academic departments, the county did not want to partner with the IHEs to create additional mentoring programs targeted specifically at alternative preparation candidates.

The second retention policy was an extensive Office of Staff Development that included over a hundred specialists dedicated to addressing teacher professional

development. Many schools also had at least half an allocated position devoted to school staff development. Their extensive Office of Staff Development reflected MCPS's commitment to retaining teachers by providing extensive school-based, job-embedded professional development opportunities. Study participants indicated that this deep commitment to staff training assisted in teacher retention. Despite these district commitments to teacher professional development, none of the individuals in the Office of Staff Development appeared to work with partnership programs to develop candidate training.

MCPS's recruitment and retention policies reflect their implementation of NCLB teacher quality provisions and the local teacher labor market; the district was able to recruit and retain highly qualified and certified teachers and target recruitment and retention policies in the hard-to-staff subject areas. Although the state policies permitted the district to use alternative preparation programs to meet teacher quality guidelines, these policies did not appear to have a major influence on the development of programs in MCPS. Although the district did not have a significant teacher staffing gap in general, teacher quality policies supported their efforts to recruit in high need subject areas through targeted recruitment programs and to retain the teachers in a supportive, educative environment.

Leadership Views

All of the district officials interviewed for this study agreed on the importance of program partnerships as a vehicle to address MCPS teacher shortages in specific content areas. One district official stated that the strength of partnerships is they "fill [staffing] niches in MCPS - hard to provide educators for MCPS in these high need areas." The

district officials spoke positively about IHE programs as an option for career changers and counted IHE partnerships as alternative teacher preparation. As one study participant noted,

There's this whole thing with four-year traditional programs versus RTCs and which is better and which is not and so forth. And it's been inconclusive as you've probably found in your research. One may not be better than another, but what works for [MCPS], if you have someone who really has the skills, they aren't going to go back to a four-year program....They just go through this and become a teacher and be really passionate about it. That's a plus.

Despite this positive description of alternative programs, study data indicate that district officials had not always been this receptive to alternative preparation. One study participant described the reaction of central office personnel when the for-profit provider Sylvan Inc. pitched an RTC program to MCPS in the late 1990s.

...we saw the Sylvan program. They came and presented to us...It was really not the way we felt our teachers should have been trained. It was too quick and dirty. We were turned off by it at that point. It wasn't until this [MC] grant opportunity came up...[the MC program director] really pushed for it because they thought it was a great opportunity for MC and it's turned out to be a win/win situation.

District officials did not agree with what they viewed as the "quick and dirty" training offered by Sylvan, but agreed to partner with Montgomery College when grant money supported implementation of new alternative preparation programs.

Study participants also stated that alternative preparation and the RTC didn't make sense for MCPS initially due to the cost of paying a full-time certified teacher salary for a RTC teacher versus the lesser salary of the conditionally certified teacher. As stated by the following study participant, hiring conditionally certified teachers was more attractive than having them teach on an RTC.

...the restrictions of the RTC...we could pay them as full-time teachers conditionally. We had no penalty for being conditional. Some counties do...So

we just paid them on a normal teacher's salary and they could get tuition reimbursement and those things. So that was always more attractive [than the RTC].

Study participants indicated an acceptance of alternative programs after the passage of NCLB because the candidates became highly qualified and certified with the RTC. As several district officials stated, "The thing that promoted us to start using [the RTC] was the HQ issue."

In sum, MCPS district officials initially viewed the RTC requirements as a hindrance to certifying teachers due to the cost of program training and the abbreviated nature of the required training; the district therefore opted to use conditionally certified teachers rather than resident teachers. Even though the MCPS IHE and MAAPP programs both targeted the same recruitment audience and included similar pedagogical training, MCPS encouraged the development of multiple IHE partnerships. Only with the availability of grant money coupled with MC's zero-cost agreement and NCLB teacher quality guidelines did MCPS agree to MC's resident teacher program.

District Organizational Structure/Capacity.

As a large school district with over 140,000 students, MCPS has a significant number of central office employees working in multiple departments including Human Resources, Staff Development, and Evaluation. As in other large school districts, relevant information about programs was not always shared across department lines; that situation had direct implications for the development and implementation of alternative preparation programs in MCPS.

First, the lack of communication between the Departments of Human Resources and Organizational Development influenced alternative programs' training curriculum.

Although MCPS's HR office was directly involved in the selection, hiring, and placement of alternative preparation candidates across programs, it delegated the training almost exclusively to the IHE. The oversight of all other teacher education and professional development programs resided in MCPS's Department of Organizational Development (OD) where an instructional specialist was responsible for facilitating and overseeing all University Partnerships. When it came to the HR initiated partnerships focused on initial teacher preparation, neither OD nor any other MCPS department participated in the training; they relied completely on IHEs to do this work. The only exception for a MCPS led initial teacher preparation training was the "Training Teachers for Tomorrow" program housed in HR in which two OD staff members assisted with training. Ironically, although MCPS dictated the types of staff development that employees of MCPS received, interviews indicated that they had very little, if any, involvement in the curriculum used in HR's IHE initial teacher preparation programs.

District officials and external program managers both recognized the lack of program oversight from HR and the lack of communication between HR and OD. One IHE partner stated:

It was awkward in the beginning too because I would be in some of the meetings and I would make sure that both partners knew. 'HR did you know that Staff Development...' and it was awkward cause I was calling people and saying we're having a meeting, do you know this? And they had no clue. So I almost felt like, get me out of this role. I'm not on the inside bringing the organization together, but we work with what they are. We work with who they are.

None of the district officials participating in this study discussed the content of the training programs or the district's involvement in the candidates' training. The IHE partners developed the training programs almost completely independent from MCPS influence.

Second, changes in the MCPS organizational structure affected the development, implementation, and prevalence of alternative programs. Historically, not all IHE partnerships funneled through OD and the University Partnership Specialist position. According to study participants, over the last fifteen years the organizational structure of MCPS changed multiple times; some of these changes complicated program oversight and communication across departments. One study participant described the impact of these changes,

What's happened is that there's been so much turn over in the county, so there's been new administrators...it's like you're starting all over again trying to explain what all of these [partnerships] are about.

At one time OD existed within HR, but over the years the departments and their leaders changed multiple times. These leadership changes precipitated a shift in resources and personnel. In the late 1990s, the once leader of the Office of Staff Development was reassigned to HR. One district official stated,

[HR] had a reorganization about the time, just before the "Training Teachers for Tomorrow" came in and the woman that used to be in Staff Development, they split it off. It was a political thing. She was assigned to [HR] and they really didn't have significant things for her to do. So they decided to have her get involved in creating some partnerships for teacher shortages that were starting and that's how the "Training Teachers for Tomorrow" came about...and then the ProMAT thing started and [HR] started inheriting these teachers [from a George Washington University partnership]...but [MCPS] actually had partnerships in HR whereas before they were always involved in OD.

According to study participants, structural changes and the political fallout resulted in HR creating partnerships to meet teacher shortages. Another study participant corroborated this statement in a discussion of the breakup of the HR and Staff Development departments. "It's a long history. Staff development was separated from [HR] then through politics...pure politics. They had taken staff development and

[thrown] it out to different places...[MCPS] had so many needs.” The study participant went on to state that the MCPS leadership placed the former leader of Staff Development in HR.

The job would evolve. So [the HR director] basically said “Go forth, find out what the problems and issues are and fix them”...And [the HR IHE partnership programs] evolved from the [teacher staffing] data analysis as well as the head people saying, “[teacher] numbers. Areas. Do something.”

The reconfiguration of district offices, the reassignment of personnel, and perceived political interactions reportedly resulted in the creation of the HR IHE partnership programs to meet specific teacher staffing needs without the consistent input of other MCPS stakeholders.

Third, as the years progressed and the district made more organizational shifts and staff changes, program partnership oversight spread across HR and OD. Both departments had IHE partnerships but the district provided no clear definition of which individuals or departments should provide guidance and assistance to external partners. One study participant’s comments summarized what emerged from other interview data,

And what has happened is...those [partnerships] were coming out of the Human Resources Department; they don’t have somebody slotted to just do partnerships so nobody knew who’s responsibility it was. So what happened is that a lot of these partnerships fell on the wayside because of a lack of management on the MCPS side. And they counted on the university to do the whole thing...there was no liaison there.

After the initial impetus for the creation of IHE program partnerships, HR did not assign one person to oversee the development and implementation of programs. HR participated in the selection, hiring, and placement of candidates, but did not become involved in general program operation or training. The University Partnerships Specialist in OD was typically not involved in the oversight of these partnership programs even

though they were all IHE programs. Consequently, specific program features developed and operated independently with little MCPS input.

Many study participants recognized that although HR valued the programs as a part of their larger recruitment plan, HR did not have the capacity to assist the partnerships in implementation. As one program implementer described the capacity issue,

Part of the challenge with MCPS is because the partnerships are housed in HR and their job and sole responsibility is to hire. And so if you need to break out of that hiring mold and see teachers are there after they're hired, that's a really hard thing to move beyond...their role in HR sort of stops when they're hired, but the partnership is still there.

Although HR did not have the time to assist in implementation, they apparently did not reach out to other departments within the organization for assistance in program development and implementation. Consequently, program leaders often were isolated from the district during implementation.

IHE partners with other MCPS professional development programs were accustomed to OD and the Office of Staff Development being involved in their programs and were confused with the interactions between HR and OD. As one IHE partner stated, "...it's a little bit confusing and they know it's confusing. But, because we're sort of the guest...We have to work inside their structure instead of saying you need to change for us." The result was IHEs implementing programs without specific guidance from the district and confusion in implementation. Although the programs' implementations reflect a partnership for candidate selection, hiring, and placement, the "partnership" ended there.

During the 2007-2008 school year, the new HR Director of Recruitment and Staffing began efforts to openly communicate with OD about partnerships. One study participant stated,

Half the partnerships are with OD...and some of them are in the Office of Human Resources and this is why [the departments] are working very closely now...[MCPS] couldn't get a handle on where are the partnerships or is this a recruitment tool for us?...we're meeting regularly and this is how we're starting to develop this partnership linking up on the needs of recruitment and I think that's one of the challenges is getting all of the partnerships under one roof that we're somehow communicating with each other.

The changing organizational structures and the lack of communication across HR and OD as to the oversight and implementation of IHE programs resulted in HR delegating training decisions to the IHEs without input from other MCPS stakeholders. In effect, HR outsourced teacher training to the IHEs. By investing monetarily in partnership programs and hiring program graduates, MCPS's HR department had in effect approved the IHE training curriculums.

In contrast, HR questioned the legitimacy of the ACET alternative preparation program; Montgomery College had to provide grant money and pay MCPS from tuition costs before MCPS would consider the program. With the decision to create program partnerships resting in HR, leaders appear to have made programmatic decisions to fill high need staffing areas based on program cost and the perceived value of program training. HR did not consult with others within the MCPS organization who may have been more knowledgeable about teacher training or district training priorities. Although in theory the district had the capacity to fiscally implement programs to meet targeted teacher staffing shortages, MCPS lacked agreement or coherence across department lines for the clear development and implementation of programs.

District Size and Socio-Economic Status

MCPS is an extremely large school district; its sheer size exacerbated district office communication issues and program implementation. As discussed above, HR created alternative preparation partnership programs without consulting other MCPS stakeholders. Several study participants stated that the large size of the district prevented clear communication across offices and departments. As one study participant stated, “I think one of our challenges for our district, we’re such a large system that sometimes central office, we do things and we can improve our communication efforts between offices...”

Not only did the district’s large size complicate internal central office communication, but it also complicated programs’ efforts to assist candidates across the school district. For example, two UMCP study participants stated that MCPS placed MCERT candidates, both paid and unpaid interns, throughout the county making it difficult for program leaders to build an understanding about the MCERT program and its candidates within the various school buildings. As one study participant summarized,

It’s a challenge because it goes through the whole school district at MCPS and people get hired in, don’t necessarily know who these people are and they don’t quite understand sometimes the long-term sub versus the teacher-of-record. I think that’s a real challenge. You have a school which might be a wonderful school, but then you have to go in and explain this is who this person is, this is what they can do because they view them all as full-time teachers almost right away because they’re very good. So, we have to step-back and say, no. Until people know that these people are teachers, they are teachers-of-record, but they are also learning and I think it’s, it’s not easier, but in some ways it’s just, it’s a little bit less to cope with then going all over the system and trying to explain to those principals what’s going on.

Even though the paid interns were the teacher-of-record for a portion of the day, they were still learning about teaching and being graduate students. Program leaders tried

to educate principals about the differences between MCERT teachers and other teachers in the building, but both the program leadership and the interns met resistance from principals about why MCERT teachers may not be as available to support the school in other capacities (e.g., extra duties, coaching). The large number of MCERT interns spread across multiple schools (e.g., during the 2007-2008 school year approximately 90 candidates) complicated program implementation as the interns struggled to meet both program and principal requirements.

As described earlier, MCPS is a very diverse district not only ethnically, but also socioeconomically (SES). In terms of SES factors, study participants indicated that MCPS tried not to place inexperienced teachers in either the lowest or highest performing schools. The majority of alternative preparation programs across the country place teacher candidates in high need and/or low SES schools (Feistrizer & Haar, 2009). In MCPS, all of the partnership programs trained teachers in high need subject areas, but did not place them in either the highest performing or the lowest performing schools. All of the teachers in HR IHE partnerships, excluding MC's ACET program, taught as conditional or long term substitutes; therefore, MCPS did not want to place these uncertified teachers in Title I, federally funded schools. Title I schools must have only certified and highly qualified teachers in order to keep their federal funding. The district did not place candidates in what study participants considered the "W" schools (Wooten, Winston Churchill, and Whitman High Schools) - the top MCPS high schools. The partnership programs focused on those schools that were not "W" schools and typically those that were not accepting federal Title I dollars. Although many alternative preparation programs across the nation focus program candidates in high need schools in

order to comply with NCLB teacher quality guidelines, since some candidates are uncertified long term substitutes MCPS places the majority of their IHE partnership candidates in non-Title I schools.

External Teacher Providers

MCPS did not utilize any external teacher providers (e.g., Teach for America) except for IHEs. As mentioned above, the partnerships created in HR concentrated on initial teacher certification while the ones from OD focused on building the capacity of current staff through professional development and advanced certification. The study participants affiliated with these two offices had dramatically varied viewpoints about external partners.

Study participants from HR and OD had drastically different opinions about the value of IHE partnerships. Representing HR views, one study participant stated, "...I love partnerships. It gets [MCPS] what [they] want and it gets people into the field of teaching where a lot of those people should be, but they just haven't figured out how to get that education." Conversely, representing OD views, another study participant stated, "The universities want to make money. Their staff is not necessarily current; they may not have ever taught in their lives and they are teaching teachers to be teachers?...I don't think so." Given the lack of OD involvement in the RTC-related programs, these differing viewpoints are important. The HR district officials viewed IHE partnerships as a way to meet staffing numbers and did not necessarily consider who taught the teacher candidates or who was involved in the training. Nor did HR consult with individuals from OD who may have been more critical of the IHE programs and altered the content or

design of programs. Instead, programs developed and operated independently with minimal involvement from MCPS.

Despite the 25 IHE partnerships (including the three RTC-related ones described in this study), the IHE study participants stated repeatedly that “MCPS doesn’t need us” and doesn’t need to depend on outside support to train teachers. IHE interview data suggest study participants believed that MCPS had enough internal capacity to complete staff development and training completely on their own. For example, in a discussion about Montgomery College, one study participant stated,

[MC] doesn’t have the same kind of relationships that many of the community colleges have with their local systems because Montgomery County has so many high quality people in-house due to their training and professional development. But a lot of school systems rely on, like Prince George’s or Howard, to come and do their training, to train their teachers and work with them. [MCPS] doesn’t need [MC].

MCPS’s positive reputation and perceived lack of dependence on outsider-led training continually infiltrated discussions with external partners and district officials.

The following quotes represent the tone of both external and internal study participants’ comments about MCPS’s positive reputation and their need for outsiders.

I’m not saying they’re the perfect school district. Unlike some of the other school districts, it’s pretty well run. And you may not like some of the policies, but overall they’re closing the achievement gap. They’re the only county that’s really fighting the HSAs [High School Assessments – Maryland’s graduation exam]...they’re up against the state all the time. They’re the big gorilla.

The superintendent [Dr. Weast] came in...initially when he got his job he was amazed at how self-sufficient the county was. He used to call it the State of Montgomery...I think that’s where the State Department and other school districts get a little angry at us because we do have a lot. We have a lot of resources and we don’t really depend on outside support. And it’s mostly the higher eds banging on our door as opposed to the other way around. But I think that’s slowly shifting as time goes on.

The view that MCPS is an independent force willing to challenge state requirements is predicated in the media (Chick, 2007). Given these outside perceptions, MCPS is in the position to call the shots and dictate how and if they will use external organizations to aid in teacher training. Rather than MCPS asking or paying for IHE partners to offer programs, according to the interview data, the IHEs tended to seek out MCPS. The interviews reflected an undercurrent of how “lucky” the partners were to work for MCPS. Another study participant stated,

You look at MCPS and all of the professional development...[They've] got like 160 people in the Office of Organizational Development...There's a tremendous amount of staff development that goes on in this county. A University comes in and says we'll do staff development for your teachers. It just doesn't mean anything because they have everything set up in the office as to what they want the teachers to know. So, what the universities have come to realize is that they have to align with what MCPS wants in professional development for their educators and they have to fall into line with that.

While study participants, internal and external, generally thought that MCPS was perfectly capable of training their own teachers without outside influence or assistance, HR still turned to IHE providers to create programs to meet specific teacher staffing shortages. As demonstrated in the last quote, although IHEs believed they had to bend to align with MCPS professional development, the RTC-related programs trained teachers independently from MCPS because OD was not involved in the development or implementation of programs.

Summary

Looking across district factors, this analysis supports several cross-cutting findings. First, although MCPS did not have an unmet demand for teachers in general, they did have teacher shortages in specific certification areas (e.g., mathematics,

science). HR established only IHE partnerships to meet local labor market shortages and set broad parameters that programs agreed to; the district controlled the selection and placement of teachers and required programs to be cost neutral. If programs accepted these parameters, the district supported programs, but delegated the development and delivery of their contents to providers.

Second, although MCPS could meet federal NCLB teacher quality provisions without developing official alternative teacher preparation programs, HR officials were still concerned about meeting highly qualified numbers in hard to staff subject areas and developed IHE programs that looked like alternative preparation programs in that teachers served as the teacher-of-record while they pursued teacher certification. The district packaged local teacher quality policies to enhance teacher recruitment and retention in high need subject shortages. By implementing programs that were either perceived as cost neutral or zero cost and investing in teacher professional development, MCPS attempted to recruit and retain quality teachers.

Third, due in part to a lack of communication across departments and changes to MCPS's organizational structure over time, HR allowed providers to implement training curriculum with little, if any, input from MCPS stakeholders. HR initiated the programs and actively oversaw program cost and the selection, hiring, and placement of candidates. Although MCPS had a large staff development office that typically provided oversight to IHE programs, MCPS stakeholders had minimal input in terms of program design and minimal oversight over alternative preparation teacher training.

Lastly, although historically MCPS district officials did not support the concept of alternative teacher preparation, MCPS began initial teacher preparation programs that

looked like MAAPP programs (e.g., recruitment from the same candidate pools, offered similar training coursework). Given the realities of MCPS targeted shortages, the NCLB highly qualified teacher provisions, and the “success” of Montgomery College’s ACET MAAPP program, MCPS officials became more accepting of alternative preparation models, but at IHEs only.

Interrelated Policy Contexts Shaping Program Development and Implementation

The federal, state, and district policy contexts and the factors described above interacted to shape the development and implementation of MCPS alternative preparation programs. The study data suggest that the federal NCLB highly qualified provisions shaped district policy decisions in reference to alternative preparation. These provisions underscored the importance of addressing the highly qualified teacher issues in all subject areas and influenced the placement of teachers in the alternative preparation programs. MCPS purposefully placed individuals considered to be highly qualified and certified in Title I schools; none of the RTC-related program candidates could be placed in these schools because of their uncertified status. Given MCPS’s targeted teacher shortages in high need subject areas, however, district officials did appear to recognize the utility of alternative preparation candidates and their highly qualified status under the RTC.

Although Maryland’s alternative preparation policies set general parameters for programs, MCPS did not have an incentive to operate programs. Only with the pressure to have highly qualified teachers in high need subject areas and the availability of grant funds did district officials begin to consider alternative preparation.

As stated earlier, with the 2007 state MAAPP policy changes, the state intended for the districts to have more control over alternative preparation programs. The state

policy provisions placed the power to recommend individuals for certification in the district superintendent's hands, thereby giving the district, in theory, the power to veto candidates believed to be unprepared for certification. In MCPS, the district established strict parameters around program cost as well as candidate selection, hiring, and placement, but left the design (content, structure, emphasis) and implementation of training in the hands of external providers, not the district personnel.

Although district officials recognized the potential usefulness of RTC programs in meeting the demand for highly qualified teachers, the district officials' views about alternative teacher preparation steered MCPS to partner only with IHE providers. The external providers' perception that MCPS didn't need them to complete teacher training gave MCPS more power to dictate the terms of IHE relationships. MCPS controlled program cost as well as the selection and placement of candidates. Programs had substantial discretion in terms of how they designed and delivered training. As long as partnerships only included IHEs, district leaders perceived the programs as legitimate and allowed them to operate independently.

Chapter Five

The Case of Prince George's County Public Schools

Prince George's County Public Schools (PGCPS) has an eleven-year history of utilizing alternative teacher preparation programs. This case uses the conceptual framework to describe a) the central features of programs as first conceived, b) how program features may have been modified and implemented across PGCPS programs, c) how district factors may have influenced the development and implementation of programs, and d) how the interrelated federal, state, and district factors worked together to shape the features of the district's alternative preparation programs.

Overview of Programs

Although PGCPS does not appear to have an official policy regarding the use of the alternative teacher preparation programs, now Maryland Approved Alternative Preparation Programs (MAAPP), they do cite alternative programs as a strategy to produce highly qualified and certified teachers in their Maryland Bridge to Excellence Master Plan⁸ (2007). Between 1999 and 2008, PGCPS had eleven resident teacher certificate (RTC), or MAAPP programs; more than any other district in Maryland. A diverse set of providers operated programs including for-profit, not-for-profit, institution of higher education (IHE), and the district; providers operated a variety of program models (e.g., module-base coursework versus college credit based coursework).

The purpose of this section is to describe the original aims of programs' features and their implementation. This study's data suggest that PGCPS's experiences with

⁸ Every Maryland district must submit a five year comprehensive district-wide improvement plan in order to receive additional state funding in response to district equity funding issues studied in the Maryland Thornton Commission.

various program providers and models informed the development of the alternative preparation programs operating during the 2007-2008 school year and the district's investment in alternative teacher preparation programs. This section includes descriptions of PGCPs's eleven alternative teacher preparation programs from 1999 to 2008.

The section is organized around the type of teacher education provider: for-profit, not-for-profit, institution of higher education (IHE) and district-run. Within each description, programs operating prior to 2007 are mentioned first and then the post-2007 MAAPPs are described in order to differentiate the programs affected by state regulation. Program descriptions consider the major sections of the framework. – program operation, entry process, training components, theory of action, program outcomes. As noted in the MCPS case, none of the descriptions include rich data about program outcomes. District data bases did not keep track of how teachers completed their teacher education or their impact on student achievement. Given the lack of formal program documentation, the study's reliance on study participants' memories, and persistent personnel turnover, program data and therefore program descriptions are uneven. Each description considers program features as initially described and then notes modifications made during implementation and discusses program outcomes.

For-Profit Provider:

Sylvan Program (1999-2005)

PGCPs's initial entrée into alternative teacher preparation was through a for-profit provider. The district did not initiate any further teacher education for-profit relationships after its initial experience with the Sylvan program. In 1999, with a Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) grant, PGCPs entered into a contract with Sylvan Learning Systems, a privately operated provider of teacher education, to

train teachers in an RTC program⁹. Under the Sylvan contract, PGcps recruited interested career changes and Sylvan provided the curriculum, training and mentoring.

Program Operation. During the late 1990s, Sylvan, located in Baltimore, Maryland, acquired an education outlet company named Canter and Associates that included a distance learning master's program in teacher education; the Canter's master's degree became known as the Sylvan Teachers Institute business line and was by most accounts the "backbone of the [Sylvan training] curriculum."

Sylvan hired a "managing director" who oversaw the "operations day-to-day in Prince George's County," assisted PGcps with recruitment, and supervised the other "instructional managers" who worked as instructors and mentors for candidates. All of the instructional managers were former educators. Only a few had PGcps specific experience; all were employees of Sylvan and not PGcps. The Sylvan program did not have a business office in PGcps; instead Sylvan's Baltimore office served as the program headquarters. Employees worked from home and traveled to candidates' schools.

The MSDE grant supported only the first year of the program. From 2000 to 2005 PGcps used district funds to support the program. Study participants estimated that the program cost the district about \$6000 per teacher. To limit the cost for the second contract cycle (2002-2005), the district restricted program admission to thirty candidates. Candidates signed a legal document obligating them to teach in PGcps for three years or to repay training costs.

⁹ The Sylvan Learning Systems, Inc. used to be the same company that ran the Sylvan Learning Centers that tutor K-12 students. In 2004, the company split into two different companies: Educate, Inc. and Laureate Education, Inc. Educate focuses on K-12 issues and retained control over the Sylvan Learning Centers. Laureate focused on postsecondary education and currently operates online degree programs through Walden University.

Entry Process. To qualify for the program, candidates had to meet basic MSDE RTC entry requirements. The initial candidate transcript review and application process went through PGCPs. As one study participant described the process,

Sylvan had a website and people would contact the website and then they would get information to contact Prince George's County Public Schools. We would ask them to send their transcripts and tell them what they needed to do in terms of taking the Praxis exams and those kinds of things. As people would bring in their materials, we'd look at it and see if they had the qualifications from the coursework and then you'd want to make sure they had taken the Praxis and everything.

Program documents and study participants indicated that the program goal was to recruit career changers from a broad array of professions.

It went after a broad audience. Anybody. We had some, not many, but some recent graduates if not June graduates come into the program who said, 'I realized I wanted to be a teacher and I didn't want to stay in school an extra year'...The idea was to try and get career changers. People who may have wanted to teach for a longer time...We went after a pretty broad audience.

Identified candidates then interviewed with two or three program administrators.

Study participants indicated that the interview panel included some principals, vice principals, and other Sylvan or PGCPs personnel. According to program implementers, interviewers followed a script and asked questions such as the following:

Why do you want to be a teacher? What's your background? Have you any experience teaching before? Have you worked with teenagers? Adolescents?...What's your background? What've you been doing? What kind of problems do you anticipate that you would have if you were a teacher?

Interviewers then rated candidates based on their answers. Study participants were not clear about the creation of the rating system or how it was implemented.

Study participants stated that, to increase program numbers for the first two cohorts, program implementers allowed individuals who had not passed Praxis I or Praxis

II content tests to enter the program. As one study participant stated, “It was surprising because they wanted people in the program. So, just about everybody was taken.” After the start of the school year, some individuals still had not passed the required Praxis tests. During the 1999-2000 and 2000-2001 school year, the state allowed Sylvan candidates to take these tests in the spring so that they could continue with the Sylvan program and be considered certified. To prevent these testing problems in future years, program administrators began to admit only individuals who had passed both Praxis I and II content tests.

Training Components. In the beginning Sylvan program candidates trained for three weeks during the summer and once a week during the school year. Summer training included all day sessions at a PGCPS school. The curriculum focused on first-year teacher “survival skills.” As one study participant stated, “They [Sylvan] devoted a significant amount to the concept of curriculum, instructional techniques, and some management skills and a smaller part was devoted to some reading and some math ideas.” The training pedagogy depended heavily on video tapes produced by Sylvan. One former program stakeholder stated, “The video tapes were of experts in the various fields and they were made specifically for Sylvan and [trainers] used those as an integral part of the instruction at that time.” Trainers included individuals from Baltimore City Public Schools, Sylvan, and PGCPS retired administrators, some of whom were then hired as “instructional managers,” or mentors, for the school year.

Initially, the Sylvan program did not have a summer school internship. As one study participant expressed, program leaders added an internship component as the program progressed.

[The program leadership] started getting feedback from Prince George's County about how the other iterations of resident teacher programs, the New Teacher Project model...they had been in place for two years and they had the internship. We started seeing, we have to be a little bit more competitive or similar in that way...we managed the last three years to put some time in [an internship].

By 2005, Sylvan added an internship component and candidates spent two weeks in summer school classrooms observing summer school teachers.

During the school year, instructional managers visited their assigned teacher candidates at least once a week to observe and mentor them. Study participants varied greatly in their recollection of the instructional manager/teacher ratio, but the data suggest that it may have been as high as 1:25 the first year, whereas in later years it may have been as low as 1:15. The instructional managers included a few PGCPs retired administrators, but, at least in the beginning, most were retired Baltimore City administrators and teachers. Study participants indicated that having these PGCPs "outsiders" mentor teachers in PGCPs was problematic. As one elaborated,

The people not from Prince George's County, they had difficulty because a lot of them were from Baltimore City and the things they did in Prince George's County were not the same. The curriculums were different. So it was more difficult for those individuals.

Study participants stated that these instructional manager experiences showed them the importance of having "internal" PGCPs people be mentors.

During the 1999-2000 school year, the Sylvan model expected RTC teachers to meet once a week with a group of their program cohorts. Prior to meeting with their groups, teachers were to view a video and complete assignments so they could participate in a discussion of the video with their group mates. Sylvan did not require instructional managers to attend all of these meetings, but Sylvan did ask them to drop in periodically.

Study participants noted that this model did not work effectively because candidates did not faithfully complete homework or attend the sessions. One study participant explained and others corroborated,

It was based upon the idea of intrinsic motivation. And the intrinsic motivation wasn't there because you had folks that were struggling as it was as a first-year teacher without a teaching background with all that implies... They were not watching the video... They were coming to class late because they never knew when the instructor was going to be there and when the instructor wasn't going to be there so they would take their chances on when they aren't coming and at times they didn't even want to meet.

After the first semester, the instructional managers convinced Sylvan that the model did not work. Another study participant described the adjustments made to the model.

[The instructional managers] went to the people in charge of the program at that time and... managed to change it so that indeed of having study teams, [they] met as a group and in that group [instructional managers] took roll so that [they] knew people were there. There was an accountability for the attendance and [the instructional managers] instructed them... [They] led the information that needed to be presented and then held [candidates]... responsible for their assignments.

Sylvan documents state that session topics included everything from how to interact with parents and how to redirect classroom behavior to reading comprehension strategies and the use of rubrics for grading. Study participants indicated that in later training years, instructional managers continued to operate winter training sessions in similar ways.

Implementation. Several aspects of the program changed over its six years in PGCPs - enforcing the Praxis requirement, changing the training schedule, including an internship, and hiring instructional managers with previous PGCPs experience. Over the course of program implementation, study participants' recollections suggested district

officials involved with the development and implementation of alternative preparation programs took ownership of the Sylvan program. One district official stated,

We've always had to have provisional teachers. In order to get [fewer] provisional teachers, we decided to utilize the alternative programs that were approved by MSDE. So, we started out with our own... We started out with our own under Sylvan Learning.

Other study participants also stated that the Sylvan program features served as a model for the later district-run Prince George's County Resident Teacher (PGCRT) program. By the end of the program in 2005, several other RTC programs had begun in PGCPs, but this program became an example for other programs.

Theory of Action. As the district's first alternative teacher preparation program, the Sylvan program sought to partner with PGCPs to provide training for teacher certification. The corporation sought to establish an alternative teacher preparation training program that it could then sell to other districts across the country. Sylvan's initial theory of action suggested that candidates could learn by watching and discussing videos on relevant topics (e.g., classroom management, working with parents) with other program members. Program implementation proved problematic because Sylvan had to hire individuals to implement the program rather than rely on the intrinsic motivation of teacher candidates to learn the material. By the end of the program, Sylvan chose to begin on-line teacher training rather than partner with specific districts to offer training.

Program Outcomes. According to study participants, well over 100 candidates participated in the first cohort and about 80 participated in the second; however, according to Human Resources records, cohort enrollments were 78 and 62, respectively (Human Resources Resident Teacher Retention Report, 2006). This data discrepancy may be attributed to this study's reliance on study participant memories or to how individuals

may have been counted for the report. Table 1 summarizes the cohort numbers, retention numbers and percentages as of the 2006-2007 school year. Looking at the retention percentages, district officials interviewed stated perceived that the Sylvan program was successful in attracting and retaining teacher candidates.

Table 5: Sylvan Retention Rate*

Year	Number Started	Number Still in System	% Retained as of 2006–2007
1999–2000	78	40	51
2000–2001	62	36	58
2001–2002	50	40	80
2002–2003	27	22	81
2003–2004	38	27	71
2004–2005	29	22	76

*(Human Resources Resident Teacher Retention Report, 2007)

Summary. In the last twenty years, the market saw an acceptance of for-profit organizations operating in several education sectors including management organizations (e.g., Edison schools), comprehensive school reform initiatives (e.g., America’s Choice, Success for All) and teacher education. The Sylvan program introduced alternative teacher preparation to PGCPs and became, in some ways, a model for later programs. A district official suggested that the profit orientation of the Sylvan organization ultimately resulted in the discontinuation of the program. “Sylvan was in the business to make money. That was a good program, but they were in the business to make money, and so, that was what they were looking at – the bottom line.” PGCPs severed their relationship with the Sylvan program in 2005 due to the high cost of Sylvan training. Study participants stated that the Sylvan program discontinued their teacher education business line in 2006 due to corporate mergers and a small profit margin. Although the district did

not initiate another relationship with a for-profit organization, other types of providers emerged over the years.

Not-for-Profit Providers

PGCPS had relationships with two not-for-profit organizations that sponsored three resident teachers programs between 1999 and 2007. The first began in 2002 and the other two of these programs began in 2007 at the urging of the new 2006 superintendent.

The New Teacher Project (TNTP), (2002-2003)

Formed in 1997 to address the issues of teacher shortages and teacher quality throughout the country, The New Teacher Project (TNTP) partners with education entities, such as school districts, to recruit high quality career changers and recent college graduates into teaching, to provide research-based training, and to create environments that maximize education impact on student achievement (Retrieved on 12/17/2009, from www.tntp.org).

Program Operation. For the 2002-2003 school year, MSDE asked PGCPS to apply for a MSDE grant to bring TNTP to the district; PGCPS applied and received the grant. TNTP placed a coordinator in PGCPS to recruit, organize and operate the program locally; the coordinator worked within the Office of Professional Development, a unit within the Human Resources Division at that time. Program cost data was not available for this program.

Entry Process. Human Resources concentrated on recruiting for other concurrent programs; the TNTP coordinator recruited for the TNTP's program. One study participant stated, "When [the TNTP coordinator] came on board, [he/she] actually

recruited...[we] didn't have to worry...[TNTP] wasn't at conflict with anything that we were doing." Another study participant who at the time worked closely with the TNTP coordinator recalled TNTP recruiting to a wide audience mostly out of the local area. Study participants shared little information about the entry process other than candidates had to meet minimum state guidelines and they had to attend an interview for program admission. Study participants did not recall how interviews were conducted or structured.

Training Components. TNTP held a several-week-long summer training session that included an internship in the morning and training in the afternoon. Study participants could not recall the specific details of the internship other than that candidates participated in a summer school internship. Trained by TNTP, PGCPs teachers taught the TNTP training sessions using their national curriculum. Study participants stated that TNTP hired local teachers to deliver the training sessions in order to infuse local knowledge of district policies and the PGCPs curriculum into the national curriculum. Candidates took reading coursework at PGCC and exam preparation courses taught through Kaplan, a test preparation company. TNTP did not provide mentors to teachers during the school year; but in some cases, teachers had school-level mentors assigned by principals through the Job-alike¹⁰ mentoring program.

Implementation. Interview data suggest that sporadic district funding and a lack of mentors at the school level prevented consistent mentoring for resident teachers. Study participants cited that the cost of the program was the main reason PGCPs did not continue with TNTP for more than one year. The following year, the superintendent found the funds to buy TNTP's curriculum and hire the coordinator to run the program as

¹⁰ The Job-alike mentoring program was PGCPs's mentoring program for first and second year teachers. Principals chose the mentor teachers who then received training and a stipend through the Office of Professional Development.

a PGCPs program. The PGCPs iteration of the TNTP program ran for the 2003-2004 school year; study participants stated that when the program director resigned from the system in 2004, the program dissolved.

Theory of Action. As a non-profit, TNTP's mission was to partner with school districts to recruit, train and retain individuals to become certified PGCPs teachers in order to address teacher shortages, address teacher quality issues, and to increase student achievement. TNTP's theory of action suggested that candidates learned best from current PGCPs teachers. TNTP hired PGCPs teachers, who believed in the TNTP mission, to infuse the local context into the organization's national training curriculum and teacher candidates during both the pre-employment and residency training phases. TNTP invested their time and resources heavily in the beginning of the resident teacher's training. Although candidates participated in supervised internships concurrently with pre-employment training, TNTP invested little energy in mentoring candidates during the school-year. The dissolution of the PGCPs/TNTP partnership after one year is telling. TNTP sold their summer curriculum to PGCPs so that the district could continue its own district-run version of the program. TNTP's actions suggest a commitment and belief in their training curriculum even if TNTP was not implementing the curriculum.

Program Outcomes. According to an HR Resident Teacher Retention report (2007), TNTP recruited 98 candidates for the 2002-2003 school year; many of the teachers were not from the Washington, D.C. metro area. Of those 98 candidates, 49 (50%) remained in the district as of the 2006-2007 school year. The 2003-2004 PGCPs iteration of the program began with 90 candidates and by the 2006-2007 school year, 57 (77%) remained in the district. Some study participants thought that national recruitment

may have inhibited the retention of TNTP teachers; the teachers recruited did not have a commitment to the area or PGCPS. One study participant stated, “The way they recruited was all over the place. When you have people in who really have very low loyalty to this [place], they are so new they can’t do it or they would step out or they’re going to become something else.” Another study participant attributed the low retention rate to the lack of systematic mentoring. “They didn’t have that mentoring piece. I don’t recall the mentoring being strong...[the coordinator] tried to do as much as she could, but the mentoring piece was not strong.” Regardless of the reason, TNTP’s had low retention numbers in comparison to other programs.

Prince George’s County Teaching Fellows – The New Teacher Project, (2007-present)

During fall 2006, the newly appointed superintendent contacted The New Teacher Project (TNTP) to express interest in TNTP coming to PGCPS. The superintendent was familiar with TNTP in part because TNTP’s mission to improve student achievement in the highest-needs schools aligned with his commitment to improve student achievement; the superintendent did not know TNTP had operated a program in the district previously. The contract signed in January 2007 stated that TNTP would provide 50 teachers for the 2007-2008 school year.

Program Operation. TNTP assigned two partners from its leadership team to oversee the PGCPS partnership and began hiring local site managers in April 2007. TNTP had two teacher certification business lines operating in PGCPS: The Prince George’s County Teaching Fellows program and the Maryland Teacher Practitioner Program (MPTP). The Teaching Fellows program included the recruitment, selection, and summer training of RTC teachers. The MPTP supported RTC teachers during the

school year to ensure that they met state certification standards. Program coordinators for each business line had office space in the district's Human Resources office.

The district paid TNTP \$4000 per candidate and an additional \$4500 to candidates as a summer stipend for a total investment of \$8500 per candidate. PGCPS also provided mentors through the Job-alike mentoring program and a group of retired individuals, called itinerant mentors,¹¹ to serve as mentors for candidates. Teaching Fellows had to pay \$1500 in certification costs to TNTP and sign a two-year letter of commitment to the district.

Entry Process. TNTP required that candidates meet minimum state RTC guidelines. To apply, candidates submitted an online application, answered three essay questions, and uploaded their resume. According to the Teaching Fellows website, the Prince George's County Teaching Fellows looked for candidates who "have excellent academic and professional records and who are committed to having a positive effect on student achievement" (Retrieved 02/25/08, from www.pgcteachingfellows.org). If candidates passed this process they were invited to an Interview Event. During the all day Interview Event, candidates participated in a small group interactive discussion and in a one-on-one interview, completed a writing sample, and taught a short sample lesson. Of the candidates invited to participate in an Interview Event, only about 50% were invited to be part of the Fellows program.

TNTP recruited both nationally and locally. According to study participants, the national organization had a central staff member who managed recruitment postings on different job websites (e.g., Craigslist, Monster, Idealist, etc.) for each of the Teaching

¹¹ Under the Office of Professional Development, the itinerant mentors, a group of approximately 20, served multiple populations teachers including first year international teachers, selected resident teachers, and 2nd year teachers identified as struggling by principals.

Fellows programs nationally. As illustrated in the following quote, the recruitment efforts were largely local.

[TNTP] recruits more locally...[They] do have some people who know that they are moving to the area and they definitely apply. [TNTP] had people move here for sure to come and work in Prince George's County, but...it's not the same like in Teach For America where it's one organization and they're recruiting nationally. [TNTP] are doing more of a local focus.

Local recruitment efforts included local job fairs, presentations at local colleges and universities, outreach to churches and community groups, and advertisements in local newspapers. A portion of one TNTP site manager's position was devoted to recruitment.

Training Components. TNTP training included a five-week summer institute in which candidates taught in summer school classrooms each morning, participated in TNTP training sessions in the afternoon, and took a reading class two or three times a week in the late afternoon to fulfill MSDE's literacy requirements. The summer internship included working in a summer school classroom for four hours a day for five weeks. TNTP attempted to place two Teaching Fellows in each summer school teacher's classroom.

TNTP hired and trained Fellow Advisors to lead the summer training sessions and supervise the internship; the majority of these individuals were PGCPS teachers. Fellow Advisors went through an interview process and participated in 32 hours of training prior to the beginning of the summer institute. According to study participants, the Fellow Advisor training ensured that all Fellow Advisors could infuse TNTP's curriculum with local curricular knowledge. One Fellow stated in a focus group, "Our [Fellow Advisor] was amazing. She went by the book, but she infused it with so much real world information. Here's what you're going to be up against." Fellow Advisors observed and

mentored Teaching Fellows in their internship placements in the morning and tied these observations into the training classroom in the afternoon. The national TNTP curriculum included lessons on classroom management, culture, and instructional design and delivery, as well as strategies for increasing student achievement in low performing schools.

Because the first cohort included only 26 teachers, TNTP hired only two Fellow Advisors – one to work with elementary candidates and the other with secondary candidates. Although the TNTP curriculum does not require training by content area, study participants stated that they hoped with more candidates in the future, each content certification would have its own Fellow Advisor.

After the school year began, the Teaching Fellows attended TNTP content seminars once every other week for three hours and took the state required literacy courses during the alternating weeks. TNTP hired and trained PGCPs teachers to be the content seminar leaders. Each certification area had its own content seminar leader in order to focus on subject specific pedagogical strategies. A program stakeholder stated, “The content seminars are divided by subject matter no matter what, even if there [are] only two people in a group.” One study participant described how these seminars operated. “The first six lessons were about backwards design and kind of laying that out and assessments and how do you prioritize and cluster your standards and developing unit plans and developing assessments for that.” According to each of the seminar’s syllabi, the rest of the time was spent on specific pedagogical content knowledge concepts. For example, the elementary content seminar syllabus stated weekly sessions covered topics such as: structural and phonetic analysis, summarizing text and

questioning, mathematics problem solving, measurement, and probability and functions of algebra (TNTP Elementary Content Seminar Syllabi, 2007).

TNTP met the state-required reading requirements in different ways. During their summer training, Fellows took reading classes several days a week as part of the summer institute. During the school year, secondary teachers attended adolescent reading courses administered by TNTP. Elementary teachers took reading courses at PGCC or online through Baltimore City Community College. As one program leader explained, TNTP sought MSDE approval for their elementary coursework as well so that, “we wouldn’t have to rely on colleges and/or universities for reading coursework.”

During the school year, the itinerant mentors visited the Teaching Fellows once a week. Initially, TNTP intended for Teaching Fellows to be mentored through the PGCPs Job-alike mentoring program, but because not all PGCPs schools participated in that program, each Teaching Fellow had a county retired/rehired assigned mentor through the Office of Professional Development.

Implementation. Study participants consistently identified two implementation challenges for the PGC Teaching Fellows: recruitment and mentoring. TNTP did not recruit the 50 teachers promised in the 2007-2008 contract. Only 26 TNTP teachers began teaching in the fall 2007. District officials stated displeasure with the result of TNTP recruitment efforts given the monetary investment. As one district official said, “We were disappointed with The New Teacher Project...in terms of the actual number of teachers that they [brought].” As demonstrated in the quotes below, multiple study participants, both TNTP program implementers and district officials, speculated about reasons for the program not meeting recruitment goals.

[TNTP is] in competition with [themselves] honestly. [They're] competing with DC Teaching Fellows and the Baltimore Teaching [Residency] because [they're] all in the same area and it's not a national pool.

One of the other points was mentioned that they got off to a late start, that normally they start in November for recruiting for the following August.

This is the only place...where [TNTP is] working where there's already an existing resident teacher program. It's very unique...in a place like Baltimore, for example [TNTP] is the alternative route program...[TNTP is] the district's program.

Whether the competitive recruitment element, the timing of their arrival in PGCPs, or the inexperience working in competition with other types of alternative programs, recruitment was an implementation challenge for TNTP.

Mentoring also proved problematic for program implementation. TNTP's state program approval stated that all Fellows would have at least twenty-five hours of mentoring by a Job-alike mentor. The Job-alike mentoring program, PGCPs's teacher induction program for first year teachers, was supposed to be a systemic network of teachers selected by principals to provide support to new teachers. The onus of responsibility of selecting teachers to serve as mentors, however, was on the principal rather than the district. At the outset of the TNTP program, stakeholders assumed that all Fellows would have access to a Job-alike mentor in their respective buildings. As one study participant described, not all principals participated in the Job-alike mentoring program so some Fellows did not have a mentor.

...a lot of the schools did have the Job-Alike mentor and it got started, but there were some people who didn't and the principals just didn't have the program set up, so we needed to figure out what to do with those people who didn't have a mentor...we were working hand and hand with [the Office of Professional Development] to figure out how to get the rest of these people matched. And so then they had a problem where a lot of their mentors...got pulled for something

else. So our people lost some of their mentors again..after meeting them in the semester.

Some Fellows did not begin working with their itinerant mentor until November. As the 2007-2008 school year progressed, in part due to the mentoring disorganization TNTP added a third TNTP staff member to support candidates in their classrooms and to organize summer training.

Theory of Action. The second iteration of the TNTP program had a similar purpose as the first: to recruit, train and retain individuals as PGCPS teachers in order to affect teacher shortages, teacher quality issues and student achievement. Program operations remained largely in the realm of TNTP rather than the district. The district treated the work of TNTP as an outsourced entity; district officials expected TNTP to handle the recruitment and training of teachers independently. Although TNTP personnel attempted to integrate themselves into district systems to affect change (e.g., weekly update meetings, e-mail communication), the study data suggest the district program implementers were resistant to TNTP.

Program Outcomes. As described above, the PGC Teaching Fellows program struggled to meet recruitment targets. Of the 26 Teaching Fellows who began teaching in the fall, 24 remained in the district at the end of the school year (Cooper, Dickstein, Hayden, Mira, and Nikundiwe, 2008). The national TNTP organization is very interested in researching the relationship between student achievement data and TNTP teacher graduates (TNTP PowerPoint, 2009), but PGCPS was unwilling to release these data to TNTP during the 2009-2010 school year.

Teach for America (TFA) – Metro Washington, D.C., (2007-present)

Teach for America (TFA) is a national organization that seeks to “eliminate education inequity by enlisting our nation’s most promising future leaders in the effort” (Retrieved on 12/4/2009, from www.teachforamerica.org). TFA recruits “outstanding recent college graduates” from top colleges and universities across the country to make a two-year commitment to teach in a low-income urban or rural school and prove that all students can achieve at high levels. In addition, TFA “believes that the best hope for ending educational inequity is to build a massive force of leaders in all fields who have the perspective and conviction that come from teaching successfully in low income communities” (Retrieved from www.teachforamerica/mission.org on 12/4/2009).

Program Operation. According to study participants, in the fall of 2006 TFA contacted the superintendent about beginning a PGCPs cohort because they were “under the impression that Prince George’s County was actually reaching out to like-minded partners...Why not ask for a meeting and see down the road if there might be room for a partnership?”

During their first meeting, according to study participants the superintendent asked TFA to begin a pilot cohort immediately. In other TFA districts, the organization took at least a year to raise funds to reduce the cost to the district. One study participant stated, “[PGCPs] did come forward with full funding for the pilot which would not have happened without that...We wouldn’t have been able to get the human capital if [the superintendent] hadn’t done that.” The superintendent committed funds to ensure candidates would start in PGCPs for the 2007-2008 school year and signed a one-year contract with TFA.

The PGCPS TFA corps members were part of the larger Metropolitan D.C. TFA corps which included the District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS) and DC Charter Schools. TFA had offices located in Washington, D.C.; PGCPS had a TFA liaison – the Director of District Strategy. TFA charged this individual with thinking about “which partnerships and placements make the most sense and where [TFA] can be the most effective” within the region.

For the 2007-2008 school year, PGCPS fully funded the \$12,000 per corps member cost to train each teacher. If TFA corps members broke their two-year commitment, they were not required to pay back the cost of their training. One study participant stated, “[TFA] has a pretty high retention rate, but [they] don’t make any guarantees. You can’t guarantee what another person is going to do...If they leave then everybody sort of loses out on what they’ve invested to that point including Teach for America.” TFA corps members were under no legal obligation to teach in PGCPS.

Entry Process. TFA focused its national recruitment and selection efforts on characteristics that the organization has found “high quality corps members” possess. Because candidates may be placed in districts across the country and state certification requirements vary greatly, TFA does not set specific GPA or coursework requirements. Study participants stated that candidates must have a minimum 2.5 undergraduate GPA, but they preferred candidates with at least a 3.8. The TFA website stated that they are looking for the following characteristics in corps members:

- Demonstrated past leadership and achievement: achieving ambitious, measurable results in academic, professional, extracurricular, or volunteer settings
- Perseverance in the face of challenges
- Strong critical thinking skills: making accurate linkages between cause and effect and generating relevant solutions to problems
- Ability to influence and motivate others

- Organizational ability: planning well, meeting deadlines, and working efficiently
- Understanding of and desire to work relentlessly in pursuit of our vision
- Respect for students and families in low-income communities

(Retrieved on 12/4/2009, from www.teachforamerica.org).

Recruitment targeted recent college graduates on a national level. In describing the process, one study participant stated and others confirmed, “The organization recruits nationally and then they sort of disperse candidates to regions.” During the application process, candidates rate regions across the country where they would like to be placed. For candidates to be placed in specific regions, they must meet the initial state certification requirements. TFA study participants considered Maryland and D.C. certification requirements “quite stringent” (Interview 9, 2007); these requirements excluded many potential candidates. Because corps members preferred the D.C. area, TFA agreed to run the PGCPSS pilot; TFA study participants stated that they did not believe that they would have a problem finding candidates on short notice.

Candidates completed an online application and an initial phone interview with TFA trained interviewers. If interviewers selected an individual to continue, they were invited to an interview day. One TFA study participant stated that the interview day included,

...a group interview in the morning and there’s a ‘sample teach’ where each of the candidates gets up and delivers a sample lesson. There’s a group activity where they’ve read articles related to education reform and issues with schools in low income communities and they discuss as a group. There’s a problem-solving exercise...They have to use data to solve a problem. There’s a written exercise and there’s a personal, one-on-one interview with a staff member.

Study participants described the interview and selection process as very rigorous. As one study participant stated, “There are several layers trying to get lots of hands and

eyes on people so that we can make sure we have the best candidates.” The trained interviewers then judge candidates using a TFA created rubric focused on attributes valued by the organization.

Training Components. Study participants spoke in great detail about the TFA summer training process. PGCPS TFA corps members attended a June orientation in D.C. The orientation introduced them to issues (e.g., children living in poverty, segregation) facing DCPS, PGCPS, and the surrounding region, helped them find housing, and organized job placement interviews. Corps members then attended a five-week training institute in Philadelphia. They lived on the campus of Temple University, taught in Philadelphia Public School (PPS) summer schools each morning, and attended training sessions in the afternoon and evenings. PPS gave TFA control over several summer schools; TFA ran the schools independently over the summer. Candidates taught every day in some capacity and observed other corps members for the rest of their summer internship. In the afternoon they attended training sessions around six content strands: teaching as leadership; instructional planning and development; classroom management and culture; diversity, community, and achievement; learning theory, and literacy development. In the evenings, candidates took workshops or met with their advisors. Every other day they turned in detailed lesson plans for the next several days. One TFA corps member described the daily lesson plan as “five pages because you would break down like every word you were saying.” Former TFA teachers and PPS teachers served as institute trainers and advisors.

In a focus group, corps members expressed that the five-week training institute was “intense.” One corps member stated, “Our days would start at 5:15 [a.m.]...the

earliest I ever went to bed was 11:30 [p.m.] and that was like a miracle. I normally went to bed around 12:30 [a.m.].” The focus group teachers stated that people were “weeded out” through the rigorous training and the institute really prepared them for teaching.

...it prepares you for things like working all the time, getting up really, really early.

...a lot of people were weeded out in the first week because it’s just so exhausting...which in retrospect was a good thing because I thought it couldn’t be harder until I actually started teaching.

According to the teachers, TFA justified the rigorous schedule “by saying you’re trying to take an education degree program and fit it in five weeks. That’s how they explain it.” After the five-week training, candidates returned to D.C. to concentrate on planning and getting ready for their classroom placements.

According to TFA program implementers, TFA Program Directors (PD), former “successful” corps members not necessarily from the D.C. region, advised and monitored corps members’ teaching and progress in meeting student achievement targets during the school year. TFA measured “success” through “significant gains” in student achievement; TFA considers a significant gain as a teacher increasing student achievement at a rate of approximately a year and a half of growth compared to the student achievement at the beginning of the school year. PDs worked with both DCPS and PGCPs corps members in a specific content area of a ratio of 1:35. The PDs visited the corps members at least four times a year but sometimes more often depending on the teacher. As described below, each time the PDs completed one of the four “official” visits, they completed a “full cycle” of evaluation and observation.

A full cycle of pre-reflection on the teacher’s part and kind of sharing of student data like how are students doing and also sharing on the front end planning

documents from the classroom to really find out what is the teacher actually doing. What is their intent and how are they planning? A classroom observation. A one-on-one meeting with their program director for data-based problem solving and then follow through. So that follow-through might involve a trip back to the classroom to observe something being implemented or depending on the nature of the problem solved it might just be an e-mail dialogue back and forth.

The PDs ran a once a month, three-hour professional development Saturday training for the corps members. In collaboration with TFA content specialists (former TFA corps members working as DCPS teachers during the 2007-2008 school year), the PDs organized professional development opportunities to be responsive to the current teaching concerns of corps members. In reference to the Saturday trainings, one corps member stated, “I don’t like waking up at 8:30 in the morning to go to them, but every time I leave I do feel [that] they’re very good at motivating you and...refocusing you why we’re here.”

Implementation. TFA was supposed to utilize the district’s Job-alike mentoring program to meet state mentoring requirements; the TFA PDs did work in a mentoring capacity, but the high PD to corps member ratio did not meet the MSDE mentoring ratio requirements of 1:15. As earlier noted, not all TFA corps members worked at a school with an appointed Job-alike mentor; therefore, the district decided to utilize the itinerant mentors who began working with many corps members in the late fall.

The TFA leadership team was not actively involved in resolving the mentoring issues; TFA and the district struggled with communications throughout the first year of implementation. One TFA study participant stated,

...They [corps members] are supposed to have a mentor working more 1:1. There was a bit of a hiccup with that at the beginning of the year...I think they’ve resolved that...I’m not sure exactly how many times the corps members have met

with these mentors, but they are supposed to at this point have an individual mentor.

TFA relied on PGCPS to monitor candidate mentoring progress and did not take an active role in ensuring they met MSDE mentoring guidelines. As a result, at least two corps members did not receive an itinerant mentor until January 2008 when they were supposed to have mentors throughout the first school year.

The TFA organization had difficulty meeting MSDE teacher literacy requirements. According to both TFA and PGCPS study participants, the TFA District Strategist was supposed to be in charge of keeping track of corps members' certification requirements, but did not do so and other program leaders did not understand the nuances of the literacy requirements. One TFA study participant's confusion over the reading requirements was clear.

They [corps members] are taking the literacy classes. My understanding is that there are multiple places that you can take these classes – you can take them through the county or through the university. I think they were given options about where they enroll into that reading class that made sense for them.

Again, TFA assumed PGCPS took care of this requirement; PGCPS officials assumed TFA did. By the end of the school year, MSDE realized that the reading coursework necessary for the RTC had not been completed; when MSDE threatened TFA's program approval in PGCPS, TFA realigned its staffs' responsibilities. According to study participants, TFA promised to "fix" the problems and closely track certification requirements to ensure corps members met state requirements.

Theory of Action. TFA sought to improve student achievement in low-income areas by recruiting high achieving recent college graduates to become teachers for two years in PGCPS. The organization worked as an external partner focused on building

school and principal relationships and providing strategic teacher assistance to increase student achievement rather than building individual teacher knowledge through extended coursework. TFA's actions suggest a belief that by providing minimal teacher training to high achieving young people student achievement will increase.

Although TFA did provide teachers for PGCPs, they did so as part of their involvement in the larger Washington, D.C. metro region. Although the TFA corps members were recruited to teach in PGCPs, their training focused on generic teacher concepts to raise student achievement rather than on the PGCPs curriculum or context. TFA's theory of action assumes that the TFA generic training model focused on raising student achievement will assist teachers in raising student achievement in any context.

Program Outcomes. According to the TFA website, nationally, 89% of TFA teachers complete their two year commitment and 67% remain in the field of education. After the 2007-2008 school year, all 29 PGCPs TFA corps members who began the year teaching remained in those roles. PGCPs study participants seemed very interested in these first year retention numbers because other programs lost at least a couple of teachers. The following quotes represent TFA program leaders and corps members hypotheses for this high retention rate.

I think [corps members] felt very proud...to be the first Prince George's County cohort. I think it's a smaller cohort of them. I think that they felt a sense of real leadership like they were really kind of responsible for the success of this partnership...That not only is their work so important because of the students that you're teaching this year, but it's so important because the success of this partnership is going to hinge on what you deliver.

I know friends from [college] who quit before [summer] Institute, ones that quit during Institute, those that quit after Institute, really it's a big weeding out process and you really...if you make it through the Institute program, barely sleeping,

working harder than you ever have in your life, you're at the end likely, pretty much committed to what you're about to do.

Both the impact of the cohort and the Institute's effectiveness at "weeding out" candidates could be possible explanations for the high PGCPS corps member retention.

TFA does keep track of corps members' impact on student achievement internally, but the organization collects data from corps members, not from the district. These TFA owned data were not available for this dissertation.

Summary. For each of the not-for-profit programs, the superintendent at the time invited the organizations to begin a program in the district. During the 2007-2008 school year, both TNTP and TFA had similar implementation difficulties with program mentoring and meeting state program approval requirements. In both instances, district program implementers were not actively involved in implementation; district officials expected program leaders to implement programs largely independent of district personnel.

Institutions of Higher Education (IHE) Providers

Most of the PGCPS alternative preparation programs have been operated by IHEs; six IHE programs operated in PGCPS from 2002-2008. Both federal and state grant money supported five of the six programs. The superintendent invited the sixth program to the district in 2006 and supported it with PGCPS money allocated by the federal government.

University System of Maryland – Project Learning in Communities, (2002-2005)

Project Learning in Communities (LINC) was a \$4.2 million Title II Teacher Quality Enhancement grant awarded to the University System of Maryland (USM). USM

proposed to create several programs supported by local institutions of higher education – Bowie State University, Prince George’s Community College, University of Maryland-College Park (UMCP) - to partner with PGCPs to recruit and retain highly qualified teachers. The project aimed to promote “student learning by developing educators and forming mutually-supportive, institutionalized relationships among K-16 teachers and learners” (Project LINC federal grant, 2000).

Program Operation. UMCP’s portion of the grant created an RTC program in PGCPs to recruit, each year for five years, 20 “talented” math and science majors to become full-time secondary teachers in PGCPs (Project LINC federal grant, 2000). Students received mentor support, a full salary as an RTC teacher, and free tuition to complete their M.ED. at UMCP. A representative from PGCPs’s Office of Professional Development served on the Project’s steering committee and oversaw other programs under the grant. Other than that, the only interaction district study participants reported to have had with the program was when the UMCP program manager checked on students’ certification status (Nutter, 2006); program operation was almost completely handled by UMCP.

Entry Process. Recruitment initially focused on graduating seniors in mathematics and science departments on the UMCP campus and later included other in-state and out-of-state institutions. The program manager relied on information sessions, newspaper advertising, and word-of-mouth for recruitment (Nutter, 2006).

Training Components. LINC teachers began their master’s coursework during the summer and assumed positions as full-time classroom teachers the following fall at a PGCPs high school. They continued to take graduate classes during the school year. By

the end of the first year, or after earning fifteen credits, LINC teachers were eligible for Maryland professional certification. By the end of the second year, or after earning thirty credits, they were eligible for an M.Ed. To aid in the transition into the classroom, LINC hired two retired PGCPS high school science teachers who worked as full-time mentors. Students also participated in LINC professional development workshops led by the program manager, support groups, and weekly formal and informal interactions with their mentors (Nutter, 2006)

Implementation. None of the coursework changed during program implementation, but program leaders did decide to implement monthly professional development workshops to assist teachers in their transition into teaching. Recruitment efforts changed because program stakeholders could not find enough interest on the UMCP campus alone (Nutter, 2006); the program manager sought recent college graduates from other colleges and universities.

Theory of Action. LINC's mission was to target the "best and the brightest" recent mathematics and science college graduates at UMCP to transition into teaching. The program's theory of action suggested that the best way to accomplish these goals was to couple graduate coursework focused on subject pedagogy with full-time teaching and mentor support. The program attempted to accomplish this goal by relying on the UMCP organization rather than including PGCPs as program partners. LINC program leaders were unable to meet recruitment goals through traditional methods and ended up placing candidates in schools that PGCPs did not necessarily classify as high needs.

Program Outcomes. As of May 2005, 12 RTC students graduated from the program instead of the grant projection of 100. As of 2007, all 12 were still teachers in PGcps (Nutter, 2006).

Howard University (HU), (2003-2007)

The federal government awarded Howard University (HU) a Transition to Teaching (TTT) grant in 2003. The HU program trained minority mathematics and science candidates to teach in Washington, D.C.; Alexandria, VA; and Prince George's County, Maryland.

Program Operation. PGcps study participants indicated that PGcps was included in the grant due to a local politician who believed that PGcps and HU should be working together. Apparently district leaders told district implementers to cooperate with HU and to "play nice with them." Study participants stated that the program was not well organized and program leaders did not communicate well with the district. For example, the interview data indicated that program leaders did not communicate candidate mentoring needs to the district until well into the school year. District program implementers also stated that HU program leaders did not consider Maryland teacher certification requirements in recruitment. Study participants noted that program cost data not available for this program.

Entry Process. HU recruited its own candidates without input from PGcps. Consequently, study participants indicated that many of the candidates did not meet Maryland's RTC requirements and were ineligible to teach in Maryland. One study participant said, "[HU's] weakest part was the recruitment," but didn't elaborate other than to state HU didn't meet recruitment goals. Since study participants had limited

involvement in program development and implementation, they were unable to describe the HU entry process.

Training Components. HU's training appears to have been a more "traditional" teacher education model with aspiring teachers taking classes at HU and completing observations of various teachers rather than a formal internship with one teacher. District implementers had no information about the specific training model or coursework the program employed.

Implementation. PGCPS's primary role was to provide mentors for the program participants, but it is unclear whether the implementation of this piece came to full fruition. The district had a full-time mentor at some of the lowest performing schools with a large number of new teachers, but the Job-alike mentoring program was not instituted at every school so not every school had a designated mentor. As one study participant stated, "Mentors were always placed in the lowest performing schools or schools with a disproportionate number of new teachers." Study participants could not indicate if HU resident teachers taught in schools with one of these mentoring services or not.

Theory of Action. The HU program's goal was to attract minority candidates to teach mathematics and science in the D.C. metro area. Program leaders attempted to meet this goal by primarily relying on HU organizational systems and limiting the involvement of PGCPS in the program's development and implementation. Study participants could not provide data about how the HU program prepared candidates for teaching. Although they did recruit some minority candidates, the program did not meet the recruitment goals and had difficulty with implementation within the state of Maryland.

Program Outcomes. Not only was the HU program unable to meet recruitment goals, compared to other PGCPs RTC programs, program retention was low. Table 5 summarizes the HU program’s retention rates as of the 2006-2007 school year.

Table 6: Howard University Retention Rate*

Year	Number Started	Number Still in System	% Retention as of 2006–2007
2003–2004	6	3	50
2004–2005	20	15	75
2005–2006	17	14	82
2006–2007	14	14	100

*(PGCPS Human Resources Resident Teacher Retention Report, 2007)

Maryland Alternative Routes to Certification Option (MARCO), (2003-2007)

In 2002, MSDE won a federal Transition to Teaching grant to establish a resident teacher program partnership with the University of Maryland – University College (UMUC), Bowie State University (BSU), and PGCPs. Study participants stated that MSDE used the MARCO program as a mechanism to hone the procedures for Maryland Approved Alternative Preparation Programs (MAAPP) program approval and to serve as an example of how RTC partnerships and programs could work. According to an American Institutes for Research (2005) report, MARCO,

...was designed to maximize the potential of the RTC program by linking individuals who complete the courses offered by UMUC to a well-coordinated yet flexible support system through which they can complete the Praxis exams and receive the additional professional development training and mentoring required to become long-term, successful teachers in high-need schools.

Program Operation. MSDE served as the organizational lead in the partnership overseeing the quality of program services and the budgetary allowances; PGCPs selected, recruited, and provided summer internship experiences for program candidates;

UMUC provided online coursework; and BSU coordinated program mentoring. Partners made adjustments to these services at monthly advisory board meetings.

The MARCO partnership received nearly \$2 million dollars over five-years from the federal Transition to Teaching grant. MSDE served as the organizational lead and facilitated relationships across the multiple partner institutions. The grant money covered half the cost of the UMUC online training courses for candidates.

Entry Process. To be eligible, potential candidates had to have a bachelor's degree with a 3.0 undergraduate GPA or higher in the content area in which they sought certification and passed both Praxis I and Praxis II content tests. For the selection process, PGCPs verified applicants' MSDE RTC eligibility and then candidates completed UMUC's graduate school application. If candidates met both conditions, program stakeholders interviewed candidates in a face-to-face interview.

MARCO recruitment took place primarily in the fall and winter because the program began in the spring. Study participants stated that although PGCPs recruited for several programs while MARCO was in operation, PGCPs officials steered candidates toward MARCO in the early portions of the recruitment season. As one of the study participants said,

So you only had from like August until December [for recruitment] because their program...in January/February start taking online classes...we always started [recruiting] in September/October, so that only gave us a couple of months to get people. And as we got people who were interested, we always gave them to MARCO.

MARCO never met their candidate recruitment goals (50 or 75 per cohort); some study participants attributed the lower cohort numbers to the starting of training in

January and the inability of candidates to take the Praxis exams in time to meet this deadline.

Training Components. The MARCO training included six modules (9 credit hours) covering topics in educational theory, human development, curriculum design, reading, and content area pedagogy. Candidates took the modules between January and June. Candidates completed lessons within the modules online at their own pace, but started and finished modules at the same time. UMUC module instructors could include UMUC faculty, USM instructors, or master teachers from school districts (Funaro, 2007).

After the completion of the online courses, candidates participated in a four-week summer school internship at a PGCPSS summer school site. The candidates worked in their internship in the morning with a summer school teacher and then spent the afternoon reflecting on their teaching, discussing issues that arose, and attending seminars on classroom management (Funaro, 2007).

Implementation. The final MARCO evaluation report (Funaro, 2007) stated that the MARCO program constantly changed and adapted over its five year history. One significant change occurred early-on in program oversight; an MSDE specialist took over program oversight after dismissing a program manager who, according to interview data, was perceived to be not performing her duties. Other major changes during implementation included the oversight and structure of candidate mentoring, the increased compatibility of on-line coursework and the summer internship, and efforts to enhance the cohesiveness of the on-line preparation program. The evaluation report references survey data and interviews that suggest program improvement occurred due to the “assignment of responsibility and accountability among the MARCO partners and the

quality and continuity of leadership provided by key administrators at MSDE, PGCPs, and UMUC” (Funaro, 2007, p.26).

Theory of Action. Since one of the purposes of the proposed 2007 MAAPP guidelines was to have resident teacher programs be more responsive to district priorities¹², the MARCO program was to serve as an example to the rest of the state as to how to operate a resident teacher program with the district as an active partner in program operation. Both district and university study participants spoke highly of the MARCO program and the collaborative nature of program improvement. MSDE also used the MARCO program as a vehicle to hone state MAAPP program guidelines to be implemented in 2007. The program addressed this goal by an MSDE specialist overseeing program operation and then using lessons learned to initiate state standards and program approval.

Program Outcomes. The final program evaluation found that MARCO teachers had a high retention rate when compared to other recruitment programs within PGCPs. Overall retention rates may be found in Table 3 below.

Table 7: MARCO Retention Rate*

Year	Number Started	Number Still in System	% Retention as of 2007–08
2003–2004	32	23	63%
2004–2005	23	20	83%
2005–2006	32	29	91%
2006–2007	37	34	92%
2007-2008	23	23	100%

*(Funaro, 2007)

¹² I served as an MSDE intern to the specialist in charge of Maryland alternative teacher preparation programs. In numerous informal conversations, MSDE leaders stated that one purpose in revising resident teacher provisions was to have programs be more responsive to the individual staffing and training needs of a district.

Although the report recommended research to connect student academic achievement to the MARCO teachers, that research had not been completed as of 2008.

Bowie State University (BSU), (2004-2005)

MSDE awarded Bowie State University (BSU) and PGCPS a portion of the MSDE Division of Special Education's Maryland State Improvement Grant (MSIG) in order to begin a PGCPS special education resident teacher program. Both entities recognized special education teachers as a high need area for PGCPS. Since none of the study participants worked with the Bowie program directly, they knew very little about its day-to-day operation. Since the program was essentially a one-year experiment and the program manager no longer worked in the district, I did not explore additional data sources.

Program Operation. BSU established the PGCPS relationship with the Office of Professional Advisement and Training (which ceased to exist in 2006) and assigned a special education specialist to coordinate the program in addition to her regular job responsibilities. Program cost data were not available for this program.

Entry Process and Recruitment. Study participants did not know about the entry process or the recruitment of candidates. I did not find any documents that discussed the program other than the PGCPS Human Resources Report on Resident Teacher Retention by Program (2006) (see Program Outcomes sections for specific information).

Training Components. Study participants knew candidates took coursework through BSU; but they could not provide information on any other components.

Implementation. Study participants stated that the program only lasted one year because of a tight budget in PGCPS. The school system did not seek to renew the grant.

Theory of Action. Little information was available about the program's theory of action. BSU's goal was to recruit special education teachers for PGCPS, but data about how they achieved this goal were unavailable.

Program Outcomes. The program recruited six teachers to begin the program in 2004 and by the 2006-2007 school year, only three teachers remained (PGCPS Human Resources Resident Teacher Retention Report, 2007).

Prince George's Community College (PGCC), (2006-2008)

In 2006, MSDE awarded Prince George's Community College (PGCC) a grant for a PGCPS RTC program to focus on provisional teachers already teaching in PGCPS¹³. District program implementers knew very little about the program because they were not involved in the program's development or much of the implementation.

Program Operation. PGCC stakeholders partnered with PGCPS's Office of Professional Advisement and Teaching (OPAT) office (disbanded in 2006) in order to draw on federal Title II money and grant funds; this money provided tuition for program candidates and program operation. According to study participants, the MSDE grant paid for the professors to teach the classes and for a program coordinator to oversee candidate matriculation while PGCPS paid tuition from federal Title II money. Candidates were then obligated to teach in PGCPS for three years.

Study participants indicated that coordination between PGCC and PGCPS was poor. PGCC worked with individuals in the OPAT office until the office disbanded in 2006; this office typically worked with provisionally certified teachers, not resident teachers, and therefore appeared to not enforce RTC state guidelines. For example, even

¹³ This 2006 MSDE grant opportunity was the same grant cycle that funded Montgomery College's ACET program with Montgomery County Public Schools.

though the PGCC candidates took a course called “Mentoring for Success,” candidates did not consistently have a mentor through their resident teacher year. Several study participants stated that PGCC candidates approached district program implementers in frustration. As one study participant elaborated and others corroborated,

PGCC had a course called “Mentoring for Success”. And they had...they had college people who would go to observe them rarely...[PGCPS is] paying [PGCC] for a class called “Mentoring for Success” and they met with them a small number of times and they went out and saw them...The teachers were not impressed.

PGCPS assumed PGCC candidates had a community college mentor because of the “Mentoring for Success” course, but in reality candidates did not receive consistent mentoring.

Entry Process. Study participants suggested that PGCC relied on PGCPS OPAT office to recommend provisionally certified teachers currently teaching in PGCPS. The study data suggest no evidence of additional recruitment activities. No data were available about the program’s entry process.

Training Components. Candidates took traditional credit-bearing classes at PGCC in the evenings while they taught full-time during the day. Data about coursework content and sequence were not available. According to district implementers, candidates had “college people who would go to observe them,” but they rarely carried out observations. The school system ended up supplying school-based mentors for the candidates to meet state required mentoring guidelines and compensate for any PGCC gaps in mentoring.

Implementation. The grant ended in 2007, but candidates were still taking coursework at PGCC. District implementers questioned the training candidates received based on feedback from candidates and interactions with PGCC program leaders. One

district implementer stated and others corroborated, “We’ve gotten feedback from some of the teachers that the courses were not what they would have liked them to be. They were not strong. They wanted to leave the program.”

Theory of Action. The PGCC program’s theory of action appears to have been for PGCC to provide certification training for PGCPS provisionally certified teachers and allow PGCPS to handle district implementation independently. Given the lack of communication across PGCPS offices and PGCC for implementation, the data suggest that PGCC wanted to have provisional teachers take coursework at PGCC, but intended to leave major portions of program implementation (e.g., mentoring, internship) to PGCPS. As indicated by the short tenure of the program, it does not appear this theory of action was viable.

Program Outcomes. I found no data referencing program outcomes.

University of Maryland Master’s Certification (MCERT), (2007-present)

The University of Maryland – College Park (UMCP) Master’s Certification (MCERT) program began in PGCPS during the 2007-2008 school year. The purpose of the program was to offer a nontraditional teacher education program at the University that focused on “inquiry and reflection, teaching for understanding, teaching for diversity, and building democratic learning” (Retrieved from www.education.umd.edu/MCERT on [12/5/2009](#)). As previously noted a version of the MCERT program also operated in MCPS.

Program Operation. UMCP had operated a master’s teacher certification program in some form for more than twenty years in Montgomery and Howard Counties. During the 2006-2007 school year, UMCP College of Education representatives approached PGCPS’s leadership about initiating the MCERT program for secondary teachers in

PGCPS. UMCP asked that the program be located at one high school and offered to build cohorts of teachers at the school. Despite the University's initial protests about the distance from the University, the MCERT paid internship program began at Oxon Hill High School. UMCP's MCERT model in PGCPS selected candidates to teach half-time and earn a master's degree and certification concurrently. Two candidates "job-shared" one position and taught half-time as provisional teachers for the first eight weeks of school. If they passed this "internship" period, they taught half-time under the RTC for the rest of the school year. After the first year, teachers could then move to another PGCPS school as a full-time teacher. As one study participant stated and others concurred, "Oxon Hill becomes...the place where we will grow the next generation of teachers."

The organizational oversight of the MCERT program at Oxon Hill fell under many of the same pre-established procedures as other UMCP programs. The MCERT program had a PGCPS coordinator who oversaw the Oxon Hill program specifically, as well as a graduate assistant who spent at least two days a week at the school working with mentors and interns. Because the program was under the umbrella of teacher education at UMCP, the resident teacher had access to Professional Development School (PDS) coordinators and content area supervisors to carry out classroom observations and mentoring responsibilities. UMCP interns also had Oxon Hill High School teachers, selected by the school administration, to serve as school-based mentors.

As earlier noted, UMCP resident teachers shared one full-time teaching position and therefore earned a half-time teacher's salary. PGCPS paid for 24 credits of the candidates' master degree at the rate of \$427 per credit. MCERT candidates signed a

contract obligating them to teach in PGCPS for three years: an internship year and two additional years. The PGCPS Office of Professional Development paid for some of the school-based mentoring costs through the Job-Alike mentoring program.

Entry Process. Potential MCERT candidates had a 3.0 undergraduate GPA in the content area they wished to teach and had to be accepted into the UMCP graduate school. PGCPS MCERT candidates had to pass both the Praxis I and II content tests prior to beginning the program¹⁴.

PGCPS did not participate in program recruitment. Candidates meeting entry requirements interviewed with a panel of UMCP College of Education faculty including content area faculty, PDS/content area coordinator(s), and one of the program coordinators. If MCERT accepted a candidate into the program, then that individual could be an unpaid teacher intern in MCPS, HCPS, or PGCPS, or they could be a paid intern in MCPS or PGCPS; interns opting for the paid internship interviewed with MCPS or PGCPS.

Study participants stated that the original MCERT model focused on recruiting career changers, but in recent years the program began to include a “fifth-year integrated master’s degree” for UMCP students who just finished an undergraduate degree in their content area. The program advertises that students who want to be teachers can add just one year to earn both teaching certification and a master’s degree (Retrieved on 2/13/2009, from www.education.umd.edu/MCERT). UMCP recruits its own candidates through newspaper advertisements, websites, and job fairs.

¹⁴ Other paid MCERT candidates in Montgomery County served as a long-term substitute teacher and therefore did not have to pass the Praxis II before they began teaching.

Training Components. Candidates took four graduate level courses in content area methods, diversity, adolescent learning and development, and reading over the summer. UMCP College of Education faculty and/or adjuncts taught the classes. The UMCP interns in the 5th year integrated program did not have to take summer coursework, but instead took the four classes as part of their undergraduate work (Retrieved on 2/13/2009, from www.education.umd.edu/MCERT).

As earlier noted, candidates began the school year as half-time teachers-of-record at Oxon Hill School. Although UMCP considered the entire school year an internship, the first two months met the RTC internship requirements. Teacher candidates typically taught classes all day on an “A or B day” and used the non-teaching days for planning, reflection, or observation. At least two days a week the teachers took required graduate coursework at local school sites.

A variety of individuals supervised and mentored the resident teachers. To meet the RTC mentoring requirements, a certified and highly-qualified Oxon Hill teacher supervised each teacher daily. The Oxon Hill mentor visited the resident teacher’s classroom regularly to observe and to provide feedback. The Oxon Hill principal chose the mentors and a UMCP graduate assistant communicated with them about their perceptions of resident teacher progress.

The MCERT program offered multiple sources of on-site support. UMCP teachers had a UMCP Oxon Hill program coordinator, UMCP content area supervisor, PDS content area coordinator, and the graduate student to provide various degrees of support. Most study participants found these multiple supports helpful. As one study participant stated, “Of course the University people...they are very supportive at the

periphery. Once they realize the issues, they become more of an integral part of that process.” Study participants found their school-based mentor and graduate assistant most helpful, but when needed, the other University supports would become involved. One UMCP resident teacher stated that he chose the UMCP program because it seemed to have the support that he thought he might need. “There’s nothing in a teaching program that normal people can’t do, but a lot of it is the mental support and the creature comfort of being able to say, ‘I’m having a problem.’” A candidate in a focus group stated that if he/she needed help either from the program all they had to do was ask.

There’s nothing in a teaching program that normal people can’t do, but a lot of it is the mental support and the creature comfort of being able to say, “I’m having a problem” and everybody pitches in to assist...That level of support is really useful...I’d say that’s a real plus.

Several UMCP program leaders questioned the quality of school mentors available at Oxon Hill High School. Indicative of other comments made by program stakeholders, one program leader said, “...we have to make sure that we have strength at the mentoring level, that those people that we ask to mentor in fact can do a good job. And we don’t always, you don’t always have all the capacity that you want there.” Although candidates appeared to meet and work with their mentors, UMCP study participants were unable to identify what methods or services the mentors used to work with candidates.

The resident teachers met periodically as a cohort at the school, but did not do so on a regular basis. As stated above, they took coursework throughout the school year. During the fall semester, they took a second methods and diversity course and periodically met to discuss their action research projects. During the spring semester, they took a third content methods class, a reading class, and conducted their action research

project. During the following summer, they took their final class entitled, “Teaching, Professional Development, and Social Change” (MCERT MAAPP proposal, 2007). Candidates completed all of their graduate coursework in one school year and two summers.

Implementation. After UMCP and PGCPS partners realized that they had only three PGCPS MCERT candidates who had passed both Praxis tests, for the 2007-2008 school year they allowed individuals who had not passed Praxis II into the program with the agreement that they must pass the test as soon as possible. These candidates remained on the provisional license until they passed the Praxis II content tests.

Although the resident teachers were supposed to observe other teachers and be involved with other classrooms in the building when they weren’t teaching, according to the candidates in a focus group, besides observing their mentor teachers, they were mostly “finding a hole in the building to plan.” Program implementers expressed that they needed a better way to direct candidate learning during the time they weren’t teaching to ensure a “rich experience for candidates.”

Theory of Action. MCERT’s theory of action appeared to suggest the importance of a long-term internship model (one year) coupled with coursework and mentoring to allow students to integrate practice and theory concurrently. MCERT’s theory of action also appeared to implement the MCERT program the same way in each partner county without necessarily responding or understanding the PGCPS realities at Oxon Hill High School.

Program Outcomes. UMCP promised 20 mostly mathematics and science teachers for the 2007-2008 school year, but recruited a total of nine teachers seeking

certification in English, mathematics, science, foreign language, TESOL, and social studies. The program planned to increase cohort numbers in the future.

University of Maryland is doing most of the recruiting...[UMCP' want[s] to talk to [the PGCPS Higher Education Coordinator] about...going out to places around here to try do some recruiting specifically for this program. Not so much for the MCERT at the University of Maryland, but the MCERT program with the RTC in Prince George's County. So we'll have very focused recruiting on that. We want to look more in southern Maryland and places NASA Goddard way.

At the beginning of the 2008-2009 school year eight of the nine teachers remained in PGCPS.

Summary of IHE Providers. All of the IHE resident teacher programs were grant funded, except for one. District program implementers perceived some programs as “worthless” while aspects of other grant programs became institutionalized. For example, the entire MARCO project not only served as an example for state program approval, but also allowed program implementers to find value in the advisory board process for program improvement. One program manager stated, “...again what we're looking at in trying to model is what [they] did in MARCO because that's where [they] learned that there needed to be program adjustment as [they] went along.” The impact of program lessons translated into other programs.

The grants also established relationships with IHEs that opened the door for further work with PGCPS. For example, one study participant commented, but others also noted,

LINC was vital in the beginning the Towson PDS partnership. We actually had PDS schools away from the close-in UMCP and Bowie State University sites. It gave us access to Towson and we are now active partners in master cert programs and plan to redevelop partnerships for PDS.

Unlike for-profit and not-for-profit partnerships, the IHE partnerships sometimes led to other programs and relationships between the IHEs and the school system.

District-Run Program

In 2005, PGCPS began a district-run program. Learning from past experiences with resident teacher programs, program implementers borrowed structural elements, training ideas and interview protocols from previous programs.

Prince George's Resident Teacher (PGCRT) Program, (2005-present)

In 2005, the district leadership decided not to renew Sylvan's contract and instead chose to initiate a district-run resident teacher program. As one study participant stated, but others agreed, "They didn't want to go with Sylvan anymore [due to cost]. They wanted to go away from the Sylvan model but they liked the Sylvan model. They thought it was a strong model." With the Sylvan and the first TNTTP programs ending, the district began its own program with the hypothesis that this "in house" management would be more cost effective for the district.

Program Operation. Beginning in the 2005 school year, the Office of Human Resources (HR) hired many of the same retired/rehired administrators and teachers who had been working as instructional managers in Sylvan's program to design and operate a Prince George's County Resident Teacher (PGCRT) program. Study participants indicated a commitment to hiring individuals with previous experience in PGCPS resident teacher programs and former administrators and teachers to run the program. As one program implementer explained, "Since we have the relationships with the school system...it allows us to do things that they [other] programs can't do." Several study participants reported that these pre-existing district relationships resulted in teachers

feeling more supported and consequently staying longer in the district; although the study data cannot establish a causal linkage between mentoring and teacher retention, the PGCPs Human Resources Resident Teacher Retention Report (2007) does indicate higher teacher retention rates than the national average.

HR oversaw the PGCRT program; two retired/rehired PGCPs administrators served as the program and mentor coordinator; and two other retired/rehired PGCPs administrators rounded out the roster of program staff. The PGCRT coordinators had vast experience within PGCPs as instructional specialists, principals, and mentors with Sylvan and other RTC programs. These three individuals took primary responsibility for selecting and interviewing candidates as well as for troubleshooting administrative issues. The other retired/rehired PGCPs administrator led the program's mentors and took primary responsibility for organizing and coordinating the candidate training program. The PGCRT Office initially had space in the main school system administration building, but moved to offices in Wise High School in 2007.

In spring 2007, the PGCRT program applied for and was granted program approval by MSDE under the new MAAPP guidelines. Program stakeholders included individuals from HR and representatives from across PGCPs divisions and offices. PGCRT's steering committee included representatives from PGCPs's Office of Human Resources, Professional Development, Curriculum and Instruction, and Accountability, as well as a principal and the PGCRT mentor leader. The steering committee served as a place to collaboratively discuss various components of the program to determine whether program adjustments needed to be made (PGCRT Steering Committee notes, 2007).

Through the 2005-2007 school years, the district used federal Title I money to train 65 teachers who were then placed in Title I schools. Although the PGCRT was initially funded almost exclusively with Title I money, a 2007-2008 program expansion to 104 teachers required the district to expand its monetary commitment. Program leaders estimated that training, mentoring, and reading class costs were \$5874 per teacher not including a \$4500 summer stipend given once to all teachers (Coffman & Muncey, 2008).

Candidates received free program training in exchange for a three year commitment to teach in PGCPSS. If teachers left the district, they were required to repay training costs. One study participant described the process: "If they quit, we send them a letter saying you owe us blank amount of money and you have to pay it back or we'll take you to the collection agency. We don't play with them." Because the candidates sign a legal document, called a Contract Addendum, future wages may be garnished for repayment.

Entry Process. For program entry, successful candidates had to meet minimum MSDE MAAPP guidelines including a 2.75 undergraduate GPA in required subject-area coursework and complete Praxis I and II content tests. Program implementers placed candidates meeting these requirements on an interview list. The PGCRT program focused recruitment efforts on "local" career changers, meaning on individuals residing in "Prince George's, Anne Arundel, Howard, occasionally Montgomery up on the Silver Spring side, Charles County and D.C. That's what I'm calling local" (Interview 1, 2007). Candidate recruitment was an outgrowth of HR's regular recruitment work. If HR officers found uncertified individuals at regular PGCPSS recruitment events, they would

have candidates send their transcripts to the PGCRT office for review. Prior to the 2007-2008 school year, potential candidates could be steered into the MARCO or PGCRT program, but HR recruited resident teachers solely for PGCRT the 2007-2008 school year since the MARCO program ended. The district even listed the PGCRT program as a vacancy on the district website.

In preparation for the interview, the program candidates received articles and scenarios. At least three people, typically two program coordinators and at least one other person (e.g., a mentor, a principal), interviewed candidates. Candidates responded to a scenario in writing at the interview and then the interviewers asked a series of questions (adapted from a previous TNTP protocol) to determine whether they would make “good” teachers. After the interview, the interview team discussed the candidate’s “strengths and weaknesses to decide whether we would invite that person to join us or not.”

The interviewers relied on professional experiences to make decisions about program entry. A few study participants discussed this decision-making process,

All people sitting around the table have been in the classroom, have been administrators, and have been educators for years. And you have a gut feeling about whether you think this person can be successful in the classroom. And that’s how you cast your vote.

You can almost sense sometimes whether this person is going to have trouble with behavior management. It kind of sticks out on them...when you ask them, What do you think your biggest challenge is going to be as a teacher and they answer I don’t think I’ll have a lot of problems. Right. Whatever. No clue.

Interviewers made judgments about candidates based on their personal experiences in observing successful beginning teachers.

Study participants estimated that the program denied about 10% of interviewees entry for various reasons related to their passion for teaching and predicted ability to be successful working with students.

We turn them down if we have trouble understanding them. If they seem to be doing it as an escape... You look for commitment. You look for a passion. It's something I've always wanted to do, but my father wanted me to be a lawyer... I became a lawyer and I've been unhappy and now it's my time. People with a passion to do this. The ones who have no clue you can tell right off or they're just looking at this as a fast escape from what they're into.

Study participants indicated that if they were unsure about a candidate or thought the candidate may need a "reality check" because they had not been in schools since they graduated from high school, they would send them to principals to substitute teach. The program used an interview checklist (adapted from TNTP) to assist in making decisions about candidates, but also utilized interviewers' intuition and past experiences as administrators and teachers to make decisions.

Training Components. The PGCRT pre-employment training program operated for five weeks during the summer. During the first week of training, candidates took one of the state-required literacy classes through the Office of Professional Development's in-district certification courses (Continuing Professional Development – CPD). The teacher candidates spent mornings in summer school classrooms observing, teaching, and assisting a summer school teacher and then spent four hours training in the afternoon at a PGCPD school training site.

The rest of the four-week training included three major strands: classroom management, instructional strategies, and some PGCPD curriculum. The following quotes suggest that the PGCRT training program was a combination of former programs'

general training curriculums that PGCRT trainers modified to meet the current cohort's needs.

Essentially we use The New Teacher Project materials...that is what we use 80% of it. The rest of it we just add some items that we feel that they need to have also such as communicating with parents, such as legal and ethical issues...a number of other types of things that over the years we've developed.

...[The curriculum was] adapted from Sylvan and it's also stuff that we have put together that we felt that's relevant for the teachers to understand and know... We don't use the same materials, but we're using their ideas, from the Sylvan program.

The curriculum included what program leaders considered "the best parts" of both TNTTP's and Sylvan training curriculums.

For four weeks, teacher candidates spent mornings in their internship placements. During the first week they primarily observed the summer school teacher and then slowly began tutoring and working with small groups of students with the expectation to have taught at least one whole group lesson by themselves by the end of the summer. Candidates stated that some cohort members taught more while others taught less.

After the summer training, teachers attended the district's Professional Educator Induction Program (PEIP) and began the school year as the teacher of record. Program mentors visited teachers weekly to observe and provide support. The resident teachers attended a program session once a week that included a 30- or 45- minute lesson from the PGCRT program. Several study participants described the structure of these sessions. The following quote represents a typical description:

[The lead mentor] will spend a little bit of time with a relevant issue like grading, back to school night, those kinds of things. We take a little bit of the time, not much, just a little bit of time, just to say, these are things that are coming up and you need to be familiar with [them] and those kinds of things.

The state-required reading class took the remainder of the evening. Elementary school teachers met once a week for both semesters and secondary teachers met once a week during the fall semester and for about five sessions during the spring semester because they have fewer state reading requirements. All candidates had to complete a teacher portfolio and present it to a panel of program staff at the end of the program.

The PGCRT program used its own group of mentors housed in the Office of Human Resources. As the following quotes illustrate, study participants' perceptions of the PGCRT mentoring suggest that because mentors were former PGCPs administrators, were involved with both the training and mentoring of teachers, and worked cohesively as a team, teachers benefited.

I think that the fact that the program...starts with instructor/mentors who start work with the people in the summer, work with them while they are in their internship, follow them into the school year as mentors, and that they're with them one night a week during the school year is probably the greatest strength.

I think the far and away major strength in the program is the mentors and the relationships that the mentors have developed through the years with the rest of the individuals in the school system. That makes it run so much easier it's not funny.

Despite these study participants' perceptions of the positive relationship between the mentors and the retention of teachers, the study data indicated no other evidence to substantiate these hunches.

Implementation. In order to qualify for MSDE MAAPP approval, in 2007 the program lengthened the summer school internship from two weeks to four, constituted a steering committee consisting of system-wide representation, and aligned program goals to national teacher education standards (e.g., INTASC).

During the 2006-2007 school year, to reduce the number of provisional teachers in the district and increase the number of highly qualified teachers in PGCPs, HR reviewed more than 600 teachers' transcripts to see if any provisional teachers might be eligible for the PGCRT program. Consequently, during the 2007-2008 school year, program numbers skyrocketed; the program included 37 teachers previously classified as provisional (District program implementer e-mail exchange, 2008). Several district study participants stated the hope that before a new hire would even be considered for provisional status in the future he/she would be required to submit to a transcript analysis for RTC eligibility since resident teachers are considered highly qualified under the law.

Before the 2005-2006 school year, candidates trained as a whole group in part due to their small numbers. With more than 100 candidates in the 2007-2008 cohort, program leaders found that training as an entire cohort did not work for all aspects of the program and divided the group into elementary and secondary subgroups. As a program implementer stated, "We might have a big session with everybody and then we have breakout sessions and we divide them into secondary and elementary. We teach the same things, but we would tailor it to that group of people."

Prior to the 2007-2008 school year, three of the retired/rehired administrators, who were also instructional managers for the Sylvan program, served as the PGCRT trainers and mentors. Due to the increase in the number of candidates during the 2007-2008 cohort, the program added eight additional retired/rehired administrators and teachers who all had teaching and/or administrator experience in PGCPs. The additional mentors attended the summer training sessions, but their primary responsibility was to support and observe candidates in their summer school internship placements. During the

school year, the mentors met the resident teachers at least once a week. The mentor to teacher ratio was approximately 1:10.

Theory of Action. The PGCRT program's purpose was to reduce the cost of recruiting and training resident teachers by allowing the district to control every aspect of the program's development and implementation. PGCRT's theory of action valued the role of PGCPS insiders in teacher training and tapped into their experience and hired former PGCPS teachers and administrators as trainers, mentors, and program administrators. The PGCRT modeled their training curriculum off programs familiar to them – The New Teacher Project and the Sylvan program. The content of training included portions of The New Teacher Project's national curriculum and other procedural information (e.g., how to work with parents, how to organize your classroom). Despite being operated by the district, the program did not make curricular links between the PGCPS curriculum or teaching and learning priorities.

Program Outcomes. The PGCRT program recruited a wide variety of individuals to fill PGCPS teacher staffing needs including openings in elementary, English, social studies, family and consumer sciences, health, music, science, and mathematics. As seen in the following table, the program has high retention rates overall, but district leaders have begun to ask if the teachers who remain have any impact on student achievement (Cooper, et.al, 2008).

Table 8: PGCRT Program Retention Rate*

Year	Number Started	Number Still in System	% Retention as of 2007–08
2005–2006	20	16	95%
2006-2007	35	35	100%
2007-2008	103	97	94%

**(PGCPS Human Resources Resident Teacher Retention Report, 2007; (Cooper, et.al, 2008)*

Program Features Findings Across Programs

The purpose of this section is to analyze features across programs. Although the state changed the alternative preparation program approval requirements in 2007 (e.g., requirement of internship, alignment with national content standards – see Chapter 3 for more detail), some programs implemented some of these provisions prior to the official MSDE regulations in 2007; others did not. Particular attention will be paid to those programs initiated during the 2007-2008 school year - Prince George’s County Teaching Fellows (PGC Teaching Fellows), Teach for America (TFA), University of Maryland Master’s Certification (MCERT), and Prince George’s County Resident Teacher (PGCRT) programs – because their development and implementation occurred after the policy changes.

Program Operation

Across the programs, program operation varied in terms of program coordination and oversight, funding, and the product earned through training. First, program coordination and oversight differed across types of providers. For example, IHE programs like MCERT relied on preexisting department structures and resources to implement a variety of supports (e.g., clinical faculty, supervisors, PDS coordinators, professors) for resident teachers as a part of the University of Maryland teacher education

network. TFA and TNTF leaned on their preexisting national structures to operate their programs, but appeared to have variable success tailoring and implementing their program in the PGCPD-specific context. The PGCDT program had former PGCPD administrators and teachers very familiar with the PGCPD context serving as program leaders, but relied on pre-existing district structures that were not necessarily designed to support initial teacher education, for program operation (e.g., content specific pedagogy training).

The type of alternative preparation provider and its ability to leverage pre-existing institutional structures made a difference in program operation. External programs able to lean on pre-existing structures did not have to create program standard operating procedures from scratch, but they did have some difficulties translating these procedures into the PGCPD context without support from the district. In most of the IHE and not-for-profit programs, PGCPD's Office of Human Resources placed candidates; in some cases the Office of Professional Development supported candidates through mentoring, but, for the most part, this office was not involved in the recruitment, selection, interviewing, or training of candidates.

Second, programs varied in how PGCPD funded their training programs. Many of the programs (e.g., Sylvan, MARCO, LINC, PGCC, BSU) relied on state or federal grant funding to begin the development of programs, but varied in their ability to translate this funding into viable, sustainable programs. Different from other years, in the 2007-2008 school year the district funded all of the programs through district funds. All but one of the programs included a service repayment; all candidates met their program's service

agreement or were subject to repaying training costs. The only program without any service repayment was Teach for America.

Third, the programs differed in product earned through training. Most programs affiliated with a four-year IHE (e.g., UMCP, Howard, BSU) allowed candidates to pursue not only certification, but also a master's degree; a couple of these four-year IHE programs (e.g., UMCP, MARCO) allowed the candidates to make the decision as to whether they pursued the graduate degree. These programs often resembled "traditional" teacher education programs in terms of course offerings and the organization of coursework in semesters. The district-run program, the not-for-profit programs, and the for-profit program all ended in certification. The training courses could not count toward a graduate degree. Instead of traditional IHE-like courses, these programs offered shorter training modules developed to meet national teacher education content standards and around topics programs identified as important for candidates.

Entry Process

The state's decision to change RTC entry guidelines in 2007 complicates comparisons of programs' entry processes over time (i.e., lowering the GPA requirement to 2.75), but also deepens the understanding of program development. First, the entry processes for programs over time were similar despite the regulation changes. IHE programs resulting in a master's degree required an undergraduate GPA of 3.0 while almost all of the other providers required only the minimum state undergraduate GPA of 2.75.

Second, the entry processes of programs seemed fairly similar, but the programs differed in the amount of program interviewer training as well as in how they identified

the desired candidate characteristics. For example, PGCRT, and to some degree UMCP, had a formal list of candidate characteristics they sought and relied on the selecting administrators' knowledge of and past experiences with which to select candidates; using their professional experience as a basis for judgment, interviewers rated candidates along a three point scale for each characteristic. TFA and TNTP not only relied on the selecting administrator's past experiences as teachers and administrators, but also trained selectors on ideal candidate characteristics based on each organization's mission and program research. The external, not-for-profit providers collected data not only on candidate and interviewee reactions to interview questions, but also on the "success" of high-scoring candidates in their classroom. They then used this information to inform and revise their candidate selection methods.

Third, all programs relied on traditional recruiting mechanisms (e.g., websites, newspaper postings, job fairs, word of mouth) to obtain local candidates. Only TNTP made web postings for national recruitment. TFA's recruitment focused exclusively on IHE campuses; TFA only competed for candidates on the University of Maryland campus. Despite different targets, programs appeared to run the risk of competing for career changer candidates in the same Metropolitan D.C teacher labor market.

Training Components

The training models for the programs had similarities and differences in intensity, structure, content of courses, and mentoring. I use the term intensity to mean the amount of material covered in the time allotted. First, of the four programs operating in the 2007-2008 school year, the MCERT program was less intense than the other three over the summer; the MCERT program offered four credit-bearing courses over four weeks of the

summer; candidates took the remaining eight courses during the school-year. The other three 2007-2008 programs (TNTP, TFA, and PGCRT) held intense summer training institutes over a four to six week period and then offered periodic professional development modules or training typically for two or three hours a week over the course of the school-year.

Second, the MCERT structure of the internship and residency differed from the other programs looked very similar. The MCERT “official” internship occurred during the first two months of the school-year. At the successful completion of the internship, candidates became half-time resident teachers-of-record. The other three programs had candidates complete internships during summer school so they could begin the school-year as full-time teachers-of-record.

Third, the content of the training and the order of concept introduction varied across programs. For example, all the programs appeared to have initial program components that one study participant called “survival skills” (e.g., classroom management, lesson planning) so that teachers could begin the school year with some level of preparedness. The programs’ curricula, however, appeared to vary in the time devoted to concepts (diversity, subject matter, pedagogical content knowledge) during the summer (RT Curriculum documents, 2007). For example, TNTP, TFA and MCERT all had either several modules and/or entire courses devoted to issues of diversity in the classroom over the summer, while PGCRT dedicated two, one and half hour sessions discussing diversity issues. MCERT had a four-week summer course devoted to a content teaching methods course while none of the other three programs’ curricula focused specifically on subject specific teaching methods during the summer session. Concepts

not addressed during the summer may have been addressed during the school year, but every program handled topic introduction differently. For example, although TNTP candidates did not design a student assessment during the summer session, candidates did design an assessment as part of their school-year training. Programs addressed similar content throughout their training, but the order in which concepts were introduced varied by provider.

All the programs had training during the school year, but the frequency, content, and depth of these sessions varied (RT Program cross-program syllabi, 2007). TNTP's bi-weekly, three-hour content seminars and UMCP's credit courses contained training on content teaching strategies and pedagogical content knowledge. TFA's monthly three-hour professional development workshops covered topics including teaching strategies, classroom management and pedagogical content knowledge. PGCRT's three-hour weekly meetings covered information on an array of teaching strategies, a reading class, and an array of other topics deemed relevant and important for teachers to know (e.g., parent-teachers conferences, grading). Most of the program training curricula included similar concepts (e.g., variations on high impact teaching strategies) and ideas (e.g., teacher directed versus student directed learning) in part due to the MSDE MAAPP requirement that they meet teacher education standards (e.g., INTASC, national teacher education content standards), but when programs covered material and the amount of time devoted to topics varied depending on the provider.

Fourth, the source and availability of mentors varied across programs. UMCP used individuals from both the school and the University to oversee the support and development of teachers, but the data suggest that the program did not have an efficient

way for mentors to monitor teacher progress. TNTP and TFA used the Office of Professional Development's retired/rehired itinerant mentors to meet state required mentoring guidelines and ratios. The not-for-profit external providers (TFA and TNTP) worked with the itinerant mentors in different ways; both organizations had different approaches to their mentoring work. According to itinerant mentors participating in a focus group, TNTP leaders appeared to make an effort to explain TNTP philosophies and curriculum to mentors as well as to support their mentoring work by meeting with them about individual candidates. TFA relied heavily on the TFA Program Directors for mentoring corps members and did not actively pursue connections between the itinerant mentors and their Program Directors. Although the state mandated a mentoring component for programs, the Maryland provisions did not stipulate how to implement mentoring or ask programs to meet any national mentoring standards like they did with the subject-specific portions of the training. Consequently, programs had great variability in their mentoring components.

Implementation

Some of the implementation changes seen across programs between 1999 and 2008 reflected the changes in RTC MAAPP regulations in 2007 (see Chapter 3 for specific changes). For example, although few of the early programs had an internship component, 2007 revised state RTC guidelines required at least a four-week internship and programs adapted and included an internship.

Most programs faced challenges when they attempted to identify individuals to pursue specific subject area certifications (e.g., mathematics, physics, special education). All teacher education programs (including traditional programs), however, historically

have had difficulties recruiting candidates in these certification areas (e.g., Johnson et al., 2005).

Programs consistently struggled to implement mentoring programs. For example, TFA and TNTP resident teachers reported a disconnect between their assigned PGCPs itinerant mentor's knowledge of their respective program's goals and the mentor's ability to help them in their classrooms. During focus groups, the teachers stated that the mentors attempted to help with general aspects of teaching and to build their self confidence. One teacher stated and others agreed, "I don't even know if I'm as great as [the mentor] says I am, but he's encouraging and he brings presents." The itinerant mentors also reported difficulty. Although they did their best under the circumstances, their limited knowledge of each program's training programs and expectations made it difficult to mentor RTC teachers. During a focus group, several itinerant mentors discussed how they knew very little about their training and they could see aspects the TNTP and TFA teachers appeared to be missing in their training. The quotes below summarize this conversation.

I have no idea what [resident teachers] do in their initial training before they're placed...I don't know anything about their training.

I don't understand the TFA requirements.

[It] seems like there's a disconnect between the teaching of content and the teaching of pedagogy [in the programs]. Teachers have a lack of human development understanding.

Based on conversations with the teachers, it seems their [summer school] practice teaching doesn't match what they're actually teaching and it makes [teaching] more difficult.

Complicating matters, some teachers did not have mentors for the first several months of teaching because a full cadre of itinerant mentors were not in place until the mid to late fall of 2007. The findings from the MARCO final evaluation report (Funaro, 2007) also documents that the mentors initially struggled to make connections between UMUC coursework and the resident teacher's classroom teaching. Mentoring proved to be a difficult component to implement across programs.

Theory of Action

All the programs appeared to have similar goals – to recruit and train individuals with content expertise to teach in PGCPs – and to share the view that program training and teaching should be implemented concurrently. All of the programs taught from generic training program containing similar elements (e.g., classroom management, diversity, pedagogy) used to train individuals to teach in multiple districts and contexts. This action implies that all individuals learning to teach should be exposed to the same content so they may teach in any district.

Programs differed in the amount of time devoted to particular training elements, the order in which they were introduced, and the amount of mentoring candidates received. The IHE providers typically spent more time on pedagogical training (i.e., MCERT candidates took three courses) while the other providers spent significantly less time on pedagogy and more time on classroom “survival skills” (e.g., classroom organization, grading). The district-run, not-for-profit, and for-profit programs training included a summer internship, while some of the IHE providers had a summer internship, others completed their internship during the school-year. The district-run program candidates received ongoing mentoring support while the IHE and not-for-profit

candidates received haphazard mentoring. The values of the particular provider determined which components or concepts they devoted more time to.

Program Outcomes

According to a PGCPs Human Resources Report on Resident Teacher Retention (2007), as of the 2006-2007 school year, 74% of the total number of RTC teachers trained in PGCPs remained in the district;¹⁵ nationally, research finds that 50% of teachers, alternatively or traditionally prepared, typically leave teaching after three years (Ingersoll & Smith, 2003). According to study participants, these high retention numbers encouraged district officials' investment in alternative teacher preparation in order to increase the number of highly qualified and certified teachers in PGCPs.

Despite the arguably high RTC retention numbers, district officials acknowledged they knew little about program completers. They'd already begun to ask questions like, What was resident teacher impact on student achievement? Did resident teachers remain in Title I or "high-need" schools? What does a resident teacher's career trajectory look like? Although some of these data may be available in the PGCPs databases, PGCPs officials stated that they did not have the internal database mechanisms or human capacity to mine the available data for answers to these and other questions.

Summary

Looking across programs and their features, this analysis supports several cross-cutting observations about the development and implementation of PGCPs alternative preparation programs. Program operation varied depending on the type of alternative preparation provider. The IHE and not-for-profit providers leveraged pre-existing

¹⁵ The 74% RTC retention rate does not include the resident teachers in the 2007-2008 cohorts because this data was not available.

institutional structures to operate programs while the district-run program used generic district standard operating procedures not meant to operate an alternative program. The for-profit, not-for-profit, and district-run programs operated with shorter training modules and ended in certification while the IHE programs required year-long, credit bearing coursework and ended with certification and a master's degree. Historically, a combination of grants and district money funded all of the alternative preparation programs, but during the 2007-2008 school year, district dollars funded all of the programs.

Although all programs tended to recruit candidates using traditional methods, the entry process varied by the type of provider. Not-for-profit programs included training for candidate interviews and used candidate characteristics derived from the organization's mission and program research to recruit and train candidates. The IHE, not-for-profit, and district-run programs relied on a list of candidate characteristics and interviewers' professional experiences to select candidates. In addition, the IHE program required higher undergraduate GPAs (3.0) than other programs (2.75).

The programs' training components all contained a variation of coursework, an internship, and mentoring in part because the MSDE MAAPP guidelines required these components. The for-profit, not-for-profit, and district-run programs had similar training structures with an intense summer component and school-year module training, but the order of concept introduction, the timing of the pre-employment training and the internship, and the mentoring structure depending on the type of provider operating the program.

In implementation, all programs, regardless of the type of provider, had trouble implementing a candidate mentoring program. Some had difficulty meeting the MSDE mentor ratio requirements while others dealt with the reality of the district's Job-alike mentoring program not existing in every school. Programs' theories of action appeared to have similar goals – to recruit and train individuals who had a bachelor's degree to teach in PGCPs – but used different combinations of coursework, an internship, and mentoring.

Lastly, program stakeholders acknowledged that they could say very little about program "effectiveness" or "quality," but through a PGCPs Human Resources Report on Resident Teacher Retention (2006), stakeholders could claim that resident teachers remained in the district at higher rates than other new hires. None of the programs could identify a relationship between program completers and student achievement.

District Factors Shaping Program Feature Implementation

This section considers how district factors mediated the interrelated federal, state, and district policy contexts to influence the development and implementation of PGCPs alternative preparation programs. As discussed in Chapter 2, the overlapping factors derived from the literature were deliberately chosen for this study due to their anticipated influence on alternative preparation programs and policies. The politics factor is interwoven throughout the discussion of other factors. Although politics was a consideration in this analysis, the available data did not allow a thorough analysis of its impact on alternative programs.

Local Teacher Labor Market

PGCPS had a chronic problem recruiting and retaining teachers. As noted in Chapter 3, PGCPS typically hired more than 1000 new teachers each year; historically a large number of those teachers were provisionally certified. Study participants attributed this large demand for teachers to a number of issues both in- and out- of district control.

First, the state of Maryland does not produce enough teachers in IHE programs to meet the state's demand for teachers. Maryland school districts often have to travel outside of the state, and at times out of the country, to find enough teachers to fill vacancies (Maryland Teacher Staffing Reports, 2002-2010). In reference to filling teacher vacancies, one district official stated,

We recognize that we cannot fill all of our teaching positions from the state of Maryland because we just don't have enough graduates. So we do secure a number of our teacher candidates from out of state and international as well. But still that doesn't meet the need for all positions that we have. We've filled over the past couple of years 12-1400 positions a year.

Any difficulty PGCPS may have had in filling teacher vacancies was exacerbated by state IHEs inability to train enough teachers to meet district demands.

Second, district officials noted that in the District of Columbia (D.C.) metropolitan area, PGCPS may not be a teacher candidate's district of choice for a number of reasons including the attractiveness of surrounding school districts (e.g., salary, working conditions) in the region and the difference in Maryland, Virginia and the D.C. certification requirements. Several district officials discussed the lack of attractiveness of teaching in PGCPS in comparison to surrounding school districts. As one study participant stated and others confirmed,

...you were really attracted to work in a large urban center, you'd be more inclined to work in D.C. than in Prince George's County because we're just not a

major capital even though we're ten times its size... In this general area, if you're willing to take a commute you can do Fairfax, DC, us, Montgomery, Anne Arundel very easily...

Other study participants identified the stringent Maryland certification standards as a reason teachers may not choose to teach in PGCPS. Discussing state certification differences, one study participant discussed D.C.'s use of lower Praxis test scores than Maryland's. For candidates only a few points shy of meeting state certification requirements, these point differences allow them to be considered highly qualified and certified in one state, but not another. The Education Testing Service (ETS) website confirms this difference: for the Praxis I test, D.C. requires passing scores five points lower on each sub-test than in Maryland (172 to 177 respectively) and in several of the required Praxis II content tests, including elementary and mathematics, D.C. requires lower scores than Maryland (Retrieved from www.ets.org on April 7, 2010). One study participant stated and others concurred, if "the state rules are so much less stringent in Virginia than in Maryland...[teacher certificate] reciprocity is so much easier...in Virginia than it is in Maryland, so that creates another whole set of problems." PGCPS was not able to compete effectively with its neighboring school districts in part due to PGCP's lack of geographic attractiveness and strict Maryland certification requirements.

Third, study data suggest that the county may have been able to recruit the teachers, but the HR processes (or lack thereof) inhibited teacher hiring and the completion of certification paperwork. Several study participants, and some news media (e.g., Chick, 2007), spoke about how the limitations of the Human Resources department influenced teachers' desire to work in PGCP and PGCP's ability to recruit and retain

teachers. One district official summarized this position: “And, then the last problem is just kind of a very politically dysfunctional, nonworking HR system in the county doesn’t help either.”

Lastly, some study participants claimed that perhaps the district’s teacher staffing problem was not due to the recruitment of teachers, but instead to the retention of teachers.

We don’t have a problem finding teachers, we have a lot of teachers that leave after the first couple of months because the fit is just not there. The principals feel a sense of pressure to have a warm body... let me get this person in here, they have a certificate, let’s get them in here. They aren’t going that extra step to think about how does this person fit into this team structure...

We lose so many teachers cause they don’t stay. That’s actually come down fairly dramatically in the last two years, but nonetheless, it is still an issue. It’s an issue in the profession that is exacerbated here in the county.

Whatever the reason, PGCPs teachers exiting the district further complicated PGCPs teacher staffing issues.

Despite the local teacher labor market challenges described above, study participants did seem to think PGCPs’s image had improved since 2006 and that improvement impacted teacher recruitment and retention. As one study participant stated,

People are excited about working here. I think we’ve become highly attractive. I think people are feeling the tons of [improvements] so they aren’t leaving. I think people are feeling tons of hope and all of the kind of good stuff that’s happening around this county wide reform initiative. Plus I think we’ve done a really good job of upping our salaries so it’s economically viable to stay here.

Some study participants connected this positive feeling to teacher retention; projected teacher vacancies for the 2008-2009 school year were down. One district program implementer stated, “We’ve always had about 1500 vacancies. We’re expecting 600 next year.” Despite this positive spin, other study participants attributed the decline to other

factors including fewer teachers leaving the district because of the economy and the potential of a new teacher pay-for-performance incentive policy though the data I acquired do not support these claims.

State and local labor market forces inhibited the district's ability to recruit and retain teachers. Study participants cited the use of resident teacher programs as a way to increase the number of teacher candidates in general and to increase the number of highly qualified and certified teachers for PGcps staffing shortages.

Teacher Quality Policies

Federal and state teacher quality policies had an impact on PGcps teacher quality policies and the development and prevalence of alternative preparation programs.

According to study participants, PGcps recruited teachers through multiple venues – undergraduate and graduate teacher education programs, resident teacher programs, experienced teachers from within and outside the state, teachers from international venues – to attempt to fill all vacancies with highly qualified and certified teachers. As one study participant summarized, "... multiple programs have been put in place to alleviate our teacher shortages."

District officials felt "a sense of urgency" to meet their required teacher quality numbers for NCLB compliance and the alternative preparation programs allowed them to meet goals quickly. As one study participant claimed and others agreed,

I think the school system itself has taken itself more seriously and feels a greater sense of urgency to meet the federal mandate than in years past... We know the quickest way to get someone in there who is certified and highly qualified is through alternative certification programs.

This claim is further substantiated by district actions with provisionally certified teachers.

In an effort to have provisionally certified teachers become highly qualified, PGcps

went through provisional teacher files to see who qualified to enter an RTC program during the 2007-2008 school year.

...one of the things that we talked about with our priority staffing plan was that we would actually go back to any provisional teachers that was hired in the school system and if they were not within like 12 credits of becoming certified or whatever we would invite them to join our resident teacher program, so it was more internal recruitment. They were already our employees.

Recruiting provisional teachers for the RTC programs allowed the district to keep teachers familiar with district policies and to meet federal requirements.

PGCPS district officials considered the state's alternative preparation policies an attractive solution to meet highly qualified and certified teacher provisions in terms of both recruitment and retention (PGCPS Bridge to Excellence Plan, 2008). As one district official stated and others concurred, "We've always had to have provisional teachers. In order to get less provisional teachers, we decided to utilize the alternative programs that were approved by MSDE." Study participants noted the high teacher retention rates of resident teachers (74%) coupled with a system already stressed by not being able to attract and retain enough teachers from traditional programs or enough highly qualified and certified teachers in general as major reasons for the prevalence of alternative preparation programs in PGCPS (HR Resident Teacher Retention Report, 2006).

Given the status of the teacher labor market and the federal highly qualified teacher mandates, PGCPS took advantage of multiple venues and utilized both recruitment and retention policies to increase the pool of teachers and to meet NCLB teacher quality guidelines. When asked about their decision-making process in determining what policies and/or programs to use for recruitment, as demonstrated in the

quotes below, district officials identified program cost and cost-benefit calculations as important considerations.

We're very selective. So we turn down a lot that we're offered. [Programs have] to [have] a track record of producing teachers that are generally successful although we're not measuring by achievement yet. Who stays...[and] other districts that face the same challenges we do, did they do a good job? That's how we've been looking at it. It's scrutinized pretty heavily to tell you the truth...

[Cost is] not a factor...the costs [are] so outweighed by the ability to retain a good teacher that in the long run in the system, the cost of remediation for kids that don't get it, the cost of constantly replacing with substitutes, all those costs are eliminated when you have a good teacher in the classroom. So. We've never said, this program's so expensive, we can't afford it. What will you produce from the program that we're interested in?

And of course we're not going to say no about having another pipeline to bring teachers in, but we have to look at it from the practical nature...Is this something that is cost effective for us? Is this the right time to do this? Can we really make this work in the time frame? Do they have all the parameters of the program? Can they get certified through MSDE? So we walk through the level of detail before we look at considering something that may be possibly viable.

According to study participants, PGCPs recruitment policies and programs reflected the need to balance cost, program outcomes, district goals, and hire highly qualified and certified teachers.

Given these district parameters for recruitment, for the 2007-2008 school year, the superintendent allocated district funds to three external provider programs (TFA, TNTP, UMCP) to recruit and train resident teachers. District officials expressed concern for the future of these programs with expected tighter budgets. As one said,

Unless we get some supplemental funds from various foundations in the next few years, I don't know if we're going to be able to maintain at that [program] level that we're maintaining. Cause the budget, this year is going to be bad for '09, but the following year is going to be even worse.

Although program cost was not the bottom line for operation in the 2007-2008 school year, whether the district will be able to continue to fund programs from district funds is an open question given the economy.

PGCPS's had few official retention policies, but claimed that district mentoring provided through the district-run PGCRT program improved teacher retention. Study participants discussed the differences in mentoring for resident teachers and other new teachers and the perceived effect of these differences on teacher retention. One district official stated,

...We say [we] provide these Job-alike mentors and all of these other supports to these new teachers coming in or what have you. I don't believe it happens. I don't believe it happens to the point that these individuals are getting the level of support...I think these new teachers over here, the 1000 or so, I think they get lost in the shuffle. They get lost in other things and they lose focus because they don't have a structure.

Although PGCPS claimed to have a Job-alike mentoring program for new teachers, this district official perceived that the district-run PGCRT mentoring program more positively affected teacher retention than the Job-alike program because of the dedicated attention that the teachers received from program mentors. The official went on to discuss the mentoring differences.

I know we have the [mentoring] program for the regular teachers, but we're not getting the same level of results [as the resident teachers] because it's such a large scale...There was some interesting feedback provided at one of the sessions that we were at...[teachers] were just talking about from the new teachers' perspective how frustrating it is not being able to get support whether it's from the central office, the school, professional development. Not knowing where to go. But I don't hear that from the resident teachers because they have a different kind of experience. It's just interesting.

Relying on anecdotal and observational evidence, this district official saw the internal PGCRT's mentoring support, supervised through HR, as what the mentoring

model should be in the district. This particular official perceived that the Job-alike mentoring program for other new teachers and the itinerant mentors used for other resident teacher programs were not effective at building teacher capacity and affecting teacher retention. Although PGCPS claimed to use mentoring policies for teacher support, district officials perceived the internal PGCRT's mentoring program as superior to other models.

PGCPS attempted to utilize a combination of recruitment and retention policies in order to increase the number of highly qualified and certified teachers to fill teacher vacancies. Due to historically high resident teacher retention numbers, the district invested in external providers for recruitment and training and thereby increased the number of resident teacher programs. The district also attempted to retain teachers through mentoring programs; the various programs had uneven success in their implementation not only with resident teachers, but with all new teachers in the district.

Leadership Views

In general, PGCPS district officials (both upper level district leaders and middle management) spoke very favorably about alternative teacher preparation programs and the void that they filled in teacher recruitment. When speaking about the types of candidates attracted through alternative preparation, one official said,

There are a wealth of folks that have tremendous talent that have come into our school system through these programs that have really given a great deal to the children of these communities. These are folks that are experienced, seasoned people who's dedication to what they want to do far outweighs what a 22 year old coming out of college [might do] ... What they give these programs and to the school system and these kids is untapped. It's tremendous.

This study participant saw the alternative programs as adding diversity to the teacher pool. Building on this idea, another district official offered that not only do the programs bring in experienced career changers, but also a more diverse candidate pool.

We have a much more diverse teaching pool through this program than they do from the university. So, university students are overwhelming white, middle or upper class, and that's nice and that's wonderful, but it isn't actually meeting the needs for me to have youth see a teacher who looks like them and who presents career opportunities as a model. And, that is another important factor for me in having the alternative programs.

From a recruitment perspective, every district study participant praised the diversity of candidates (race, gender, and age) alternative preparation brought to the district.

Even though programs may have attracted a talented, diverse group of individuals, data suggest that the programs may not have prepared them to teach content. An evaluation report of the MAAPPs in 2008 found that most programs focused on issues of classroom management rather than pedagogy (Cooper et al., 2008). Only one district official agreed with this report and expressed concerns about the brevity of teacher training and its focus on compliance issues rather than teaching content.

It's not rigorous or rich enough in terms of instructional methodology or pedagogy. It's not enough for deep content. We have to do a lot of supplication around both of those. However, they tend to be run in a much more focused, more collaborative way than universities.

Despite this concern, all district study participants expressed general approval of alternative teacher preparation.

When pressed to describe alternative preparation program strengths, however, district officials focused on program organization rather than the actual quality of the training program itself; they appeared mostly interested in the contributions the resident teachers made to meeting NCLB provisions. District program implementers (those

district middle managers charged with assisting programs in implementation) identified most of the training programs as “good” if they perceived programs as being organized. For example, in discussing the Sylvan program, one study participant stated that the program was “well organized, well planned...we were getting a good global employee, and then as the years went by they could tailor it to the individual.” In describing the Howard University program, which by many accounts had lots of implementation problems, one district implementer stated “their weakest part was their recruitment. Very structured. Very organized” but said nothing about teacher training. When I probed how it was a “good” program, the study participant stated it was again very “organized.” Many of the study participants commenting above worked in Human Resources and many of the district program implementers were housed in Human Resources. District officials in general seemed focused more on meeting NLCB teacher quality provisions than the training and improvement of training programs and they did not systematically include other PGCPs stakeholders (e.g., Professional Development, Curriculum and Instruction) to review program training.

Study interviews indicate district leaders viewed external providers, IHE and private providers, as an important part of the district’s vision for teacher recruitment and training. The district leaders believed in the importance of a “portfolio of providers.” When asked if he/she ever saw a day when PGCPs would not need external providers, a district leader said, “I would say I can’t see a day that would happen...they’re not mandates; they are partners in a small term strategy.” Despite these positive views of external providers, in the following quotes district leaders recognize the rigidity of IHEs and the flexibility of private providers

We take them both [types of providers] because we need them both, but I would never just take one.

We can't tell the university what to do and change its program. But in programs that we hire, we have this opportunity to kind of mold and work with them on that. And I like that. Very much so. So, we can customize certain things with TFA and TNTP. You just can't do that with University of Maryland, Towson, Morgan. It just doesn't work that way.

It's difficult for the college, again things I think are getting better, but previously it was very difficult for colleges to come to a school system to see things a little differently, other than here are courses x, y, and z and here are the ways things are going to be never mind what a school system really needs and how it will work for the teachers.

District leaders saw all external providers as important contributors to district goals, but saw the private providers as more willing to accommodate district priorities.

The leaderships' vision of a "portfolio of providers" fostered a sense of competition between programs and created difficulties in initial program implementation (i.e., recruitment) for external providers. The leadership viewed the external organizations as an opportunity to challenge the district's status quo and improve programs. When asked about the MAAPP external providers, a district leader stated that they were a positive force in PGCPs.

I think those external, we call them external providers, push the heck out of the level of comfortability and entrenchment on the inside [central office] and that's also one of the very deliberate things as to why I wanted these external providers....

Study interviews indicate that the external providers appeared to make district program implementers (those district middle managers charged with assisting external programs in implementation) somewhat uncomfortable by threatening their control over resident teacher recruitment and training.

The district program implementers interviewed viewed the 2007-2008 external programs as overpriced and superfluous; conversely they viewed the internal district-run program (PGCRT) as more effective and cost-efficient than the external programs. They touted the internal PGCRT program as the cheapest and the most efficient way to train resident teachers and appeared somewhat resistant to any external resident teacher programs. One district implementer stated,

We do what we do with more [resident teachers] than [external providers] have and do it with far less resources in terms of money. And since we have the relationship with the school system that the other programs don't have, it allows us to do things that they can't do.

Many district program implementers seemed "on guard" during study interviews. They defended the internal program and in many cases did not see any advantage to external providers. One district program implementer illustrated the types of comments district implementers made about external providers.

I know people say you can't put a value on the quality or the value of the education of the student. And I believe that 100%. But at some point you've got to look at your bottom line and be able to say, can we get to the point of where we need to be in terms of getting the same type of teacher by going a different route. Not cutting corners, but going a different route to be able to get that same product.

Although this district program implementer did not explicitly say the district-run PGCRT program's name, the underlying implication of the rest of the interview suggested negativity toward the high cost of external providers and the low cost of the internal program.

Ironically, district implementers did express ownership over previous external programs. For example, when I asked one district implementer about the early Sylvan program, he/she had a clear sense of program ownership. One stated, "We started our

own [resident teacher program] under Sylvan learning.” Even though the program was a for-profit external program and the district only assisted in the recruitment of candidates, the district program implementer appeared to claim ownership of the program. District implementers did not express this same sense of ownership over the 2007-2008 programs; some actually indicated a sense of disgust over the amount of money PGCPs paid the external organizations and the organizations subsequent failure to meet recruitment goals.

External providers confirmed an underlying tension between district program implementers and external providers, and acknowledged a sense of competition between the PGCRT and external programs during the 2007-2008 school year. As the following quotes illustrate, external providers were unaccustomed to districts not embracing programs in the district.

This is the only place that I know of where we are working where there’s already an existing resident teacher program. So it’s very unique...it’s been interesting to navigate because it’s a little bit different.

What’s been hard for us, that’s their program [PGCRT] and this isn’t their program[external program], so that’s been very different. We came in with the assumption, this is for you, we want to bring in new teachers for you. This isn’t about us at all. But what’s hard is just trying to get that across. It’s okay to send people our way because it’s teachers for you as well. But it is trying to compete for the same population.

External providers stated that usually districts embraced the external organization as its own in recruitment and implementation, but with an internal program already in place, external programs found initial program implementation difficult.

External program implementers generally found PGCPs district implementers responsive to program requests for clarification and data, but did not find most district

implementers overly helpful nor did they take ownership of external programs as external providers had experienced in other districts. For example, during the 2007-2008 school year, TNTP was supposed to bring 50 candidates to PGCPS, but only brought 25. HR claimed that TNTP was supposed to bring its own candidates to the table without PGCPS help, while TNTP claimed that its job was to assist current recruitment and to work with the district, not to compete with it. One study participant described how the district recruiters did not offer TNTP as a potential option for candidates; instead they only suggested the internal PGCRT program.

...if [a potential candidate] is like, “I’m not certified, what do I do?” [TNTP] feel[s] that either [the candidates] just aren’t told anything, or there isn’t a really good place or getting the help desk people to say, “Well, here’s our list of [program] options.” That really just hasn’t happened yet. And so, [TNTP] felt last year everyone just went straight to the resident teacher program [PGCRT] because that’s what’s been in existence forever. [TNTP’s] like, “Hey, we’re over here.” We’re trying to figure out a way to say, “Here’s the two programs. Which one would be right for you?” I think part of the problem is that the programs are very similar. So there are definitely differences in terms of the curriculum. We keep really up to date. It’s really current. But, those are just small nuances that I don’t think if you’re a person from the outside...they don’t really care. They just see getting certified and starting right away.

The district program implementer interview data suggest that they resented the external program’s invitation to the district and didn’t go out of their way to assist in implementation. The district leadership’s vision of making the district implementers uncomfortable by challenging “entrenchment” worked, but in the process help to hinder the recruitment of 2007-2008 external programs because district implementers appeared threatened. It doesn’t appear that district program implementers actively blocked the district leadership’s interest in external providers, but they did not help the external programs thrive either.

District officials' positive views of alternative teacher preparation in general either from previous experiences or with the high retention rates of PGCPs resident teachers facilitated the development and implementation of programs. But, the disconnect between the district leaders' value of a "portfolio of providers" and the district program implementers' views that the district-run PGCRT program was the "best" resulted in recruitment difficulties. The data suggest a struggle occurred between the district leaders, the district program implementers, and external providers over alternative preparation program development and implementation.

District Organizational Structure/Capacity

Since 1999, PGCPs has had six superintendents; the superintendent in office during the 2007-2008 school year was in his second year of service. This frequent superintendent leadership turnover contributed to division and departmental leadership upheaval and a lack of communication across departments and offices. The leadership turmoil directly affected the operations and governance of the central office and RTC programs. As one study participant commented, and others confirmed,

[I've seen] a lot of changes when things just collapse and you abandon [initiatives] because you're told to...but I've stayed. I really felt like I've made significant contributions, but also...because of so many shifts, have seen things that could have been...

Another study participant commented that each "different administration, different superintendent, different person as human resources chief" seemed to want something a little different and would invite different organizations into the district based on previous relationships. District aims, goals, and personnel appear to have changed with each new superintendent; these changes compromised the district's capacity not

only to implement previously existing programs in the district, but also to create new partnerships to meet teacher staffing needs.

The multiple structural changes and a lack of communication across department and office lines resulted in a confusing mix of IHE and RTC programs. Across PGCPSS, initiatives and programs, including resident teacher programs, had been created in isolation; one district department would sign an agreement with an IHE and other departments that could be involved in program implementation had no knowledge of its creation until students or teachers had already been recruited. A resident teacher program example would be the 2004-2005 Bowie State University (BSU) special education program. BSU made their agreement with the PGCPSS Office of Professional Advise ment and Training (OPAT) but OPAT did not share this information with the larger PGCPSS organization.

Another example occurred in the planning stages of a resident teacher program set to begin in 2008. HR began negotiations with the College of Notre Dame to start a Dual Certification program in Special Education in January 2008; however, not all of the relevant departments, including the PGCPSS Offices of Special Education, Professional Development, or Curriculum and Instruction, were part of program negotiations. As one study participant recalled,

That one [College of Notre Dame Dual Certification program] was a negotiation with HR that didn't tell us until after the fact. So, now we're in and after the fact we're doing the cooperative agreement while they're in the process of putting together the [Memorandum of Understanding].

The program included the required special education coursework offered by the College of Notre Dame, but had very little emphasis on classroom and behavior management, and the beginning repertoire (Cooper et al., 2008) necessary to work with

special education students. Study participants stated that HR saw a staffing issue need and made the decision to initiate a special education resident teacher program without input from other district stakeholders (i.e., special educators) who may have been able to recognize these program design issues earlier.

The lack of communication meant relevant PGCPS stakeholders weren't necessarily aware of some programs. For example, one study participant discussed the effect of a PGCPS division and office reorganization:

They would normally call me to say, 'Hey, we have so and so who wants to start an RTC program with us. You've done work with this. Could you sit in on this one, or review this paper...or give your input as to what you think is lacking?' So then I was very much involved. But, then when I went to [a different division, the leader] didn't want me to have anything to do with [the program].

This large number of programs created without oversight resulted in "uncontrolled" program development and implementation; multiple district officials created multiple programs across multiple departments without oversight. As represented below, study participants spoke about the uncontrolled creation of programs.

I think what we've done is, as a district we have dramatically attempted to start all kinds of programs and we did 'em quick and we did 'em in some cases in a haphazard fashion...and now we're going back to see how successful it was and we're saying, 'Well there's some things that we've learned from this process that as we go forward we need to apply. Cause we can do, not only do a better job at this, but we can be more effective in the use of significant funds. I don't just want to train. I want to retain.

It was uncontrolled. It was uncontrolled and the system...really didn't know what partnerships it had. And we're still after a year firming them up...they were in many different departments and there was no controlled mechanism for departments to share information with each other...the system as a whole never got a view of what was going on and there couldn't be any synergy between departments because they had no mechanism for sharing [information].

In response to the confusion surrounding programs, in 2006 district leaders created the Office of Higher Education Partnerships, charged with “trying to not only get a handle on the various partnerships the district has with universities, but also to make sure that those partnerships align with district needs and...develop new partnerships that align with district needs.” The purpose of the office was to attempt to harness district programs and initiatives to better address district priorities. During the 2007-2008 school year, district study participants knew about this new office and the confusing mix of programs, but district leaders appeared to be still struggling to stop district program implementers from working independently from one another.

Given the leadership turnover, organizational change, and the limited communication across departments, different types of program providers had different experiences in their negotiation of the PGCPS system (e.g., external providers versus IHEs). The uncontrolled program creation across departments resulted in individuals knowledgeable of resident teacher guidelines and requirements not necessarily being involved in program development and implementation. Sometimes this lack of knowledge resulted in the discontinuation of the program (e.g., Bowie State University, Prince George’s Community College) and other times it resulted in program implementers not fully understanding Maryland guidelines and certification requirements (e.g., TFA, Howard University).

District Size and Socioeconomic Status

Even though PGCPS is one of the largest school districts in the nation and three of the four 2007-2008 MAAPP programs were to place candidates in “high-needs¹⁶” schools, study participants did not identify the district’s large size and high number of students living in poverty as factors shaping program development and implementation. Given the number of alternative preparation programs and the district’s eligibility for grant funds, the data suggest PGCPS’s high number of students living in poverty did affect the number of programs as well as which schools the district placed candidates.

The high number of students living in poverty impacted the kinds of program created and implemented in PGCPS. Both not-for-profit national organizations (TFA and TNTF) required their local affiliates to report the number of “high needs” youth their teachers worked with each year and the “impact” of their teachers on students (as defined by the national organization). Both organizations also developed their national curriculums around issues of privilege and working with diverse learners. PGCRT candidates worked entirely in Title I schools because some program funding came from federal Title I dollars¹⁷. District study participants indicated that a majority of the teacher vacancies each year were in their Title I or “high need” schools. In order to maintain federal funding levels through NCLB, all teachers in Title I schools must be “highly qualified.” Since teachers utilizing the RTC are considered both certified and “highly qualified” by the state, PGCPS concentrated the number of resident teachers at Title I

¹⁶ Each organization had its own definition of “high needs” sometimes utilizing federal definitions and other times using the district’s definition; the district’s definition used consistently higher poverty numbers than the federal government.

¹⁷ In order for a PGCPS school to be identified as Title I in the 2007-2008 school year, over 65% of its students had to qualify for free and reduced lunch services.

schools in order to improve their “highly qualified” numbers at each school; thereby placing the most inexperienced teachers with the highest risk population of children.

In addition, PGCPS partnered with several organizations (e.g., University System of Maryland, University of Maryland-College Park, Bowie State University, Maryland State Development of Education) in several federal and state grants for resident teacher programs because of its classification as a “high needs” school district; in the state of Maryland only the Baltimore City Public School system and PGCPS qualified as eligible partners for most of the grants. The LINC and MARCO programs received money from federal Title II grant monies which required the inclusion of a “high needs” school district for the award. The Howard University (HU) program also began with a Title II grant.

Consequently, the vast majority of alternatively prepared teachers taught in lower socioeconomic Title I or high needs schools while more experienced teachers or other newly certified teachers taught in higher socioeconomic schools. This finding is consistent with the research base stating that alternative preparation candidates primarily teach in lower socioeconomic schools (Feistriizer & Haar, 2009).

External Teacher Providers

As demonstrated in earlier sections, district leaders generally supported the use of external providers while district program implementers questioned their cost and efficiency. Despite this dichotomy in central office views, the quotes below suggest study participants seemed to understand the leaderships’ desire to bring in external providers; developing programs with the external providers served to show outsiders (e.g., media, external/governmental actors) that PGCPS was working to address staffing issues and

was willing to work with well-known national organizations help to find highly qualified teachers.

It's political because we are trying to change the image of where we are getting our candidates. And they are national, and they are outstanding national organizations. New Teacher Project is thought well of in New York and Teach for America – they've been in existence for over 10 years. So, in the education arenas, they are well thought of...

What's happening with [the superintendent] is that he doesn't have a lot of time because we're in restructuring because he has to change these test scores very quickly. He has to change the image very quickly...which he has done.

With things happening in Prince George's County, it's had its up and downs in the media. That always influences whether people want to come here or not.

Although study participants did not unpack their treatment of politics in these statements, they appear to suggest that for the 2007-2008 school year, the superintendent invited multiple providers with positive reputations into the district to prove that the district was doing something to recruit and train quality teachers. The data suggest that decision had more to do with meeting federal and highly quality teacher mandates and staffing schools than the kind of training teachers received; the district had little to no influence on the development and implementation of the training curriculum or external providers models.

Summary

Several findings may be gleaned from this PGCPD case. First, market forces shaped the development and implementation of PGCPD alternative preparation programs. The district's significant demand for highly qualified and certified teachers fostered the growth of alternative programs. PGCPD's designation as a "high need" district allowed it to be one of two districts in Maryland eligible to partner with external organizations for

grant money. RTC programs became a primary recruitment and retention tool due to the district's eligibility for grant funds and the high resident teacher retention rate over time.

Second, the views and values of district officials shaped the types of program providers and the implementation of programs. During the 2007-2008 school year, the district leaders utilized local budgeted money to begin MAAPP programs (TFA, TNTP, MCERT) for a multitude of reasons including changing the district's image, diversifying the candidate pool, leveraging more control over teacher training, and inviting a "portfolio of providers" into the district to push for internal program (PGCRT) improvements. District program implementers, however, did not fully support the leadership's investment in external providers. Although it appears that the district program implementers did not actively block or hinder external program implementation, they also didn't actively assist. These actions sometimes impeded the recruitment process (i.e., TNTP) and other times complicated the implementation of the mentoring program (i.e., TFA).

Lastly, PGCPs was not actively involved in the development of the coursework component of training. Depending on the type of provider and their training model, PGCPs stakeholders may have been involved in the placement of candidates for the internship, but were not involved in describing or developing the relationships between the candidate and their cooperating teacher. PGCPs was involved in the implementation of the mentoring component for many programs, but consistently struggled to implement mentoring across the district and across program models.

Interrelated Policy Contexts Shaping Program Development and Implementation

In the PGCPs policy context, the district translated state and federal teacher quality and alternative preparation policies into the development and implementation of programs in PGCPs. Due to PGCPs's inability to attract teachers, district leaders relied on the permissive nature of the state alternative preparation policy to allow districts to create teacher training partnerships that yielded highly qualified and certified teachers. Although alternative programs were initially identified as a way to increase teacher numbers and fill teacher vacancies from previously untapped candidate pools, the programs became a significant method to meet federal teacher quality guidelines. By outsourcing teacher recruitment and training to external providers, the district was better able to fill teacher vacancies with highly qualified and certified teachers.

Various factors and policy contexts influenced program features. Programs had the freedom to design their programs as long as they met appropriate content and national standards (i.e., INTASC) and basic state MAAPP policy guidelines. Consequently, programs contained the same basic structures (e.g., pre-employment training, internship, residency training), but varied in their definition and implementation of training components. The development and implementation of the training curriculum did not include PGCPs officials or, in most cases, emphasize the PGCPs context or curriculum. All of the programs used a national, or generic training curriculum that included similar concepts (e.g., diverse learners, pedagogy, adolescent development). The amount of time spent on topics and the order in which they were introduced depended on the provider and their opinions on what and their engagement in the national teacher education debate rather than on district factors.

The state MAAPP policy guidelines also influenced the development and implementation of program mentoring components. MSDE required every program to have mentors for teachers during their residency phase. Some of the external providers (e.g., TNTP, PGCC), however, did not include mentoring as part of their program model; the program's theory of action did not include mentoring as a component. So, programs had to rely on the district to provide mentors for candidates if they were going to have a Maryland approved alternative preparation program. A lack of organization and communication across district departments impeded the implementation of a mentoring component. In this case, both state mentoring guidelines and district factors shaped the development and implementation of the mentoring component. As predicted, a combination of factors in the federal, state, and district policy contexts shaped the development and implementation of programs in PGCCPS. Federal NCLB teacher quality policies provided the impetus to create alternative preparation programs and Maryland alternative teacher preparation policies permitted the programs. The individual program theory of action, programs' views about the national teacher education debate, and meeting appropriate subject area and teacher education standards shaped the content and structure of the program training curriculums. PGCCPS leaders saw the need for a diversity of teacher providers and bought in the external providers because of their ability to recruit and train teachers to meet the district's teacher staffing challenges and increase the number of highly qualified and certified teachers.

Chapter Six: Cross-Case Analysis, Refinements, and Implications

The Montgomery County (MCPS) and Prince George's County Public Schools (PGCPS) case data provide a basis from which to consider the similarities and differences in alternative teacher preparation programs across district policy contexts. Each case study analyzed the similarities and differences of program features within the district, as well as the influence of contextual factors shaping alternative preparation program development and implementation. These cases provide the foundation for this chapter's cross-case analysis. This analysis is organized around the study's questions as described in chapter one. Findings from this study both build on the alternative teacher preparation literature and add depth to our understanding of how districts mediate state and federal policy as they develop and implement alternative preparation programs. This chapter then presents the conceptual refinements and implications of this study for policy design and implementation of alternative teacher preparation programs and for future research.

How are program features similar and different across districts?

Analyzing program features across district contexts yielded several key findings that build on the existing research and extend the understanding of alternative program development and implementation. The development and implementation of program features across district contexts follows the pattern of more district involvement in MCPS and less in PGCPS, but in both districts, providers developed and implemented training components largely independent of district influence.

Program Operation

The similarities and differences of program operation appeared to reflect the views of district leaders about cost and alternative preparation as well as the realities of meeting district teacher staffing vacancies through alternative preparation programs.

Similarities. In both districts, Human Resources (HR) departments spearheaded district efforts around alternative teacher preparation, but had limited involvement in program operation. The district HR offices established parameters for providers; the providers then delivered the program. In MCPS, all programs interacted exclusively with HR. HR set program cost and recruitment goals and participated in the selection and the placement of candidates in schools, but left all other program operation decisions to the provider. In PGCPs, HR set recruitment goals and placed candidates in schools, but left most other program operation decisions to the provider.

HR officers in both MCPS and PGCPs viewed alternative preparation programs as a mechanism to fill teacher vacancies, but neither district provided significant support for program implementation nor were district officials involved in the development and delivery of the training curriculum of most programs. Program leaders in both districts expressed concern and sometimes frustration about the lack of involvement of district officials during implementation as well as the lack of communication between various district offices and program officials. For example, in MCPS program leaders spent a significant amount of time explaining program goals and responsibilities to potential partner schools without the assistance of district personnel. In PGCPs, external program providers sometimes had difficulty navigating the district's bureaucracy and obtaining answers to questions because internal district departments did not necessarily share

information or coordinate their work; for example, the certification and staffing specialists did not regularly interact even though they worked on inter-related tasks.

This study supports the Johnson et al. (2005) claim that alternative preparation programs tend to require more resources and organizational support than initially anticipated in program development. Although the HR departments of each district wanted these programs to fill teacher vacancies, they were not prepared for the continuing demands nor ready to provide the support necessary to develop and implement the programs. In her study of alternative programs, Birkeland (2005) found that in order to build and maintain programs, both the partnering district and the provider had to collaboratively leverage resources to meet program goals. In this study, the HR offices initiated the development of programs and set specific parameters, but expected providers to develop and implement programs without organized district support.

Differences. The districts had significant differences in how they conceptualized and handled the cost of programs. In order for MCPS to create any alternative preparation partnership, the program had to be cost neutral for the district; the cost of training candidates could not exceed the salary of one fully certified teacher. Conversely, PGCPS often paid large sums of money for external providers to recruit, train, and certify candidates. As with many alternative programs across the country (Feistritz & Haar, 2009), federal and state grants funded at least a portion of many of the PGCPS programs, but MCPS was not eligible for these grants due to the higher overall socioeconomic status of county residents. In addition, PGCPS's status as a district in "corrective action" made finding highly qualified and certified teachers an imperative to avoid having the state

issue directives or take other actions available to them to address issues of low student achievement.

In exchange for funding alternatively prepared candidates, both districts required candidates to sign a service repayment agreement that included a commitment to the district for a period of time if the district paid for their training. The only exception in PGCPs was the Teach for America corps members. Corps members could leave at anytime during their two year program without a financial penalty. MCPS's position on cost allowed them to dictate some of the terms of program operation while PGCPs's corrective action status and need for a higher number of teachers allowed the provider to exert more control.

The districts also differed in the providers they agreed to partner with and the partners' end product. MCPS began partnerships only with IHE providers. Until Montgomery College's ACET program, the RTC-related program candidates took credit-bearing coursework and earned teacher certification and a master's degree at the end of the program. In PGCPs, many of the programs delivered the curriculum through modules rather than credit-bearing coursework; all of the candidates earned teacher certification at the end of the program. Some of the IHE programs ended in both certification and a master's degree. While MCPS only created partnerships with IHE providers, PGCPs created partnerships with nine different IHEs, not-for-profits, and for-profit providers.

Entry Process

The similarities and differences of the entry process across programs and districts appeared to result from district parameters, provider priorities, state policy guidelines, and program goals.

Similarities. Both district HR offices determined program recruitment goals that were based upon the projected number of teacher vacancies in specific subject areas. Both districts focused particular attention on hard-to-staff subject areas; this finding is consistent with the literature that states alternative preparation programs typically recruit in harder-to-staff certification areas (e.g., Clewell & Villegas, 2001a). Provider priorities and goals then determined the target population (recent college graduates or career changers) and the recruitment strategies. In both districts, programs recruited a combination of recent college graduates and career changers through similar recruitment mechanisms (e.g., websites, information sessions, career fairs).

Programs had similar entry standards across providers and districts. State policy guidelines set the content coursework eligibility requirements for certification as well as the minimum undergraduate GPA of 2.75. Some IHE providers increased the undergraduate GPA requirement to 3.0, but the other providers used the state minimum of 2.75. So, programs across districts did not differ significantly in their minimum entry standards.

Differences. The level of district involvement in candidate selection and the interview process differed across districts and providers. In MCPS programs, district staffing specialists participated in candidate interviews and made the final decision on selection. As one MCPS program manager summarized, “I work directly with the Human Resources for the candidate selection. I mean, they’re the bottom line.” In PGCPS programs, program providers handled the selection of candidates without HR’s input. Once HR provided the recruitment targets, providers made candidate selections.

The structure of the interview process differed depending on the providers. The two- and four-year IHEs and the district-run programs invited candidates for an interview. The interview panel may have included program stakeholders with experience in teacher hiring and placement as principals, mentors, teachers, and program administrators. After a 30-45 minutes “getting to know you” interview, the panel decided whether to admit the candidates. The not-for-profit programs had a more in-depth interview and selection process that included phone interviews and day-long interview events. Program-trained interviewers selected candidates based on characteristics reflecting the mission and purpose of the specific program. Although both districts set recruitment goals for programs, in general, MCPS district officials set strict parameters around candidate selection and the interview process while PGCPS relied on the providers to handle the process.

Training Components

In general, the study data suggest that programs across districts contained similar training components. The state MAAPP policy requirements required that all programs contained the same structural elements – pre-employment training, internship, and residency training – and met national and content teacher education standards. The provider’s theory of action shaped how programs met these state requirements through the content, intensity of the training, the internship structure, and the mentoring programs; district officials in both districts offered little input into the development and implementation of program training other than when the internship took place. Programs’ training components differed more by the type of provider than by district.

Content. Program curricula contained similar coursework topics, but differed in the time dedicated to specific aspects of the material and the order of its introduction. All programs across district contexts assumed that candidates had a firm grasp of the content and did not include subject matter training other than in the pedagogy involved in teaching the subject. The depth to which programs addressed concepts like pedagogy depended on the type of provider and its theory of action. TFA's mission focused on increasing student achievement scores. Teachers did not participate in ongoing pedagogical training, but instead received this type of support only if their students' achievement test scores did not steadily increase. The UMCP MCERT program included three subject-specific pedagogy courses; this emphasis suggests program leaders believed candidates might understand content, but did not necessarily know how to teach it. The PGCRT district-run program candidates only participated in pedagogical training one-on-one with their mentors on an as-needed basis. The providers' theories about what was important for teachers to know, understand, and how to develop that knowledge in prospective teachers appeared to be a major factor affecting the depth of training in specific areas.

All of the four-year and some of the two-year IHE programs trained candidates using coursework (e.g., pedagogy, diversity, action research, reading, adolescent development) that already existed as a part of other teacher education programs at the college or university. This IHE finding affirms Walsh & Jacob's (2007) claim that some alternative programs have come "to imitate the very education programs...they were meant to replace" (p. 34); the authors refer to the original alternative certification

proposals that sought to create pathways into teaching that replaced IHE's monopoly over the teacher education market.

However, the not-for-profit, for-profit, and district-run programs primarily relied on training modules or seminars for candidate instruction that were very different from the traditional credit-based IHE system. These seminars focused on, at least initially, the survival skills, or "beginning repertoire," of teaching (Cooper et al., 2008) and then on other topics like adolescent development or issues of diversity. As long as programs met state guidelines and the required standards, program leaders decided the depth to which they taught certain concepts. The variety of programs in these districts calls into question Walsh & Jacob's (2007) claims that all programs now operate the same and demonstrates how a wide variety of programs may exist under the same state certification requirements.

Intensity. The intensity of program training, here meaning the amount of time allocated to cover the material, also depended on the program provider. In PGCPs, the not-for-profit, for-profit, and district-run programs included an intense summer component lasting no more than six weeks. The summer experience was a combination of an internship and various summer modules or seminars. During the school year, the programs had weekly or bi-weekly professional development sessions. Similarly, the Montgomery College program structured its training modules in a short, intense time period during the winter but required students to complete an internship during the school-year rather than over the summer; candidates then completed training modules during their year-long residency. The majority of the IHE programs in both MCPS and PGCPs did include some sort of summer training or coursework, but emphasized credit-

bearing coursework spread over an entire year while candidates completed their paid “internship” or residency during the school-year. Again, as long as programs met state guidelines, program leaders were free to decide the intensity of program training without district input.

Internship. Although the districts were not involved in most aspects of program operation, district officials did dictate when candidates completed their internship. Most MCPS candidates completed their internship while they served as full-time and part-time long-term substitute teachers because the district had in most if not all subject areas a sufficient supply of highly qualified and certified teachers from other sources; MCPS did not necessarily need RTC label for highly qualified and certified teachers in order to meet state and federal staffing guidelines. Montgomery College’s candidates completed an internship prior to their time as the teacher-of-record; none of the MCPS program candidates completed internships over the summer. Although some programs referred to candidates’ experiences as a long-term substitute as their “internship,” in reality, most candidates in the programs studied resembled candidates in other alternative preparation programs; they had little experience in a classroom prior to their first day of teaching during the school-year and really were learning on the job (Dill, 1996).

PGCPS district leaders explicitly created a number of programs including resident teacher programs in part to obtain highly qualified and certified teachers during the school year. In order for candidates to be considered highly qualified, state policies required candidates to participate in an internship prior to their residency. Therefore, the PGCPS program candidates enrolled in the not-for-profit, for-profit, and district-run programs all completed internships during the summer and served as the full-time,

resident teacher-of-record during the school year. The PGCPS MCERT program candidates completed their internship as a half-time provisionally certified teacher-of-record in the first two months of the school-year and then finished the school-year as a half-time resident teacher. Again, district leaders were not involved in the particulars of training, but did dictate specific parameters around the internship and the candidates' roles as the teacher-of-record.

Mentoring. Similar to other alternative preparation studies, programs in this study consistently had difficulty implementing a mentoring component (Darling-Hammond et al., 2002; Humphrey et al., 2008; Zeichner & Schulte, 2001). The literature suggests that because teachers are being trained “on the job” (Dill, 1996), mentoring is a key component to candidate success (e.g., Humphrey et al., 2008). Maryland statutes require that RTC teachers receive mentoring support of some kind, but the policies do not define how this mentoring should occur.

In MCPS, the implementation of this mentoring relationship depended on the school context; each school assigned a mentor to the teacher without input or communication with the program. Mentors had little, if any, involvement with program training and did not necessarily know the types of courses and classes candidates took. In PGCPS, many principals did not participate in the district Job-alike mentoring program so candidates did not have a school-based mentor. The central office then provided mentoring support for candidates. In general, these mentors had little if any information about candidates' program training. Although alternative candidates had been promised a mentor, not all of them received the planned mentoring support. These findings affirm previous studies' findings that although mentoring may be promised in alternative

preparation, the implementation varies by contexts and sometimes by schools (Darling-Hammond et al., 2002; Humphrey et al., 2008; Zeichner & Schulte, 2001).

Implementation

In both districts, HR did regulate program implementation by setting initial parameters (e.g., program participants must serve as resident teacher or long-term substitute) as well as hiring and placing teachers. Program providers assumed responsibility for implementation and patterns of program implementation were often provider-specific. For example, some programs had difficulty meeting specific recruitment goals (e.g., LINC, TNTP) while others consistently met recruitment goals (e.g., TFA). Some programs adapted training to include abbreviated training modules with a summer school internship (e.g., TNTP, PGCRT, TFA) while other programs maintained credit-based coursework for training (e.g., UMCP, JHU). Mentoring implementation, however, was a cross-cutting challenge across programs and types of providers (e.g., MARCO, UMCP, TFA, TNTP).

Theory of Action

Programs within and across districts adopted the same general goals of alternative preparation – to recruit, train, and certify candidates from non-education backgrounds – but their conceptualization of this goal and the packaging of program components required to meet state guidelines depended on the programs’ theories of action as well as the type of external provider. For example, the IHE MARCO program sought to provide a more flexible teacher education experience by adapting training requirements and providing online pre-employment training opportunities. The for-profit Sylvan program sought to create a general teacher education curriculum that not only met Maryland

requirements, but also could be sold and implemented in districts across the country. The IHE programs, however, did share some commonalities in their theories of action.

Most of the IHE programs across districts did not articulate a theory of action. Their implicit theories of action suggest the importance of coupling theory and coursework, practice teaching, and mentoring to build reflective practitioners; but, program actions did not necessarily support these ideas. For example, most IHE programs had university supervisors and school-based mentors, but did not have an articulated method of how these individuals should work with teachers to build an understanding of pedagogy. Candidates were not really “practice teaching;” they were the teacher-of-record in the classroom and therefore accountable for the students’ learning even though they had little, if any, previous experience teaching. In an effort to be competitive with other alternative preparation programs and meet district requests, IHE programs created or altered existing programs that allowed teachers to complete coursework and teach as a teacher-of-record simultaneously without altering their training. IHE programs did change structural elements of programs (e.g., the internship); as previously discussed, these findings challenge Walsh & Jacobs (2007) claim that IHEs renamed current programs as alternative preparation. Despite altering their conception of an internship to mean learning to teach on the job without the continuous support of a mentor teacher, the IHE programs described in this study do not appear to have adjusted the coursework training to include aspects of teaching important for beginning teachers (i.e. classroom management and organization) (e.g., Cooper et al., 2007).

Program Outcomes

Similarly in both districts, district and program leaders did not systematically collect data about program outcomes . As initially conceptualized in the proposed study framework, the program outcomes component included information about teacher recruitment and retention as well as links between teacher preparation and student achievement. The programs studied could provide recruitment targets and how they did or did not meet targets, but were unable to consistently discuss or provide documentation about teacher retention and student achievement links.

The PGCPs retention data indicated that resident teachers stay in the district at a high rate (74%); this finding is contrary to what other researchers have found across the country (e.g., Kane et al., 2007)¹⁸. Despite this high retention number, PGCPs personnel looked up individual teachers in district databases to ascertain their status within the district; the district did not have a mechanism within their databases to easily construct program outcome data. MCPS district officials did not share retention information.

The cases do not include information about links between teachers and student achievement scores in part because at the time of data collection the programs did not have access to this information and also because linking forms of teacher preparation with patterns of student achievement is a very complicated process. Since many factors interact to affect student achievement, efforts to link changes in student achievement tests scores to a single factor such as teacher preparation is an oversimplification. Study participants acknowledged that they knew little about program completers' impact on

¹⁸ Kane et al., (2007) found that a high teacher turnover rate of alternative preparation candidates within the first three years. Part of this difference may be attributed to the Teach for America factor; candidates are only required to remain in teaching for two years and therefore may lower retention numbers.

student achievement despite the emerging policy emphasis on program outcomes in teacher education (e.g., Noell & Burns, 2006).

Summary

Looking across districts and programs, this analysis supports several cross-cutting observations about the development and implementation of alternative programs. Human Resources initiated and set parameters for programs in both districts. MCPS could be more selective with providers; if providers did not agree to MCPS's specific parameters (cost, selection, placement, long-term substitute status), MCPS would not partner with them. PGCPS had fewer parameters (placement, resident teacher status) and partnered with multiple providers.

Although MCPS set more program operation parameters than PGCPS, both districts allowed programs to develop and implement training mostly independently. Once programs met minimum state policy requirements and district parameters, they looked quite similar in terms of training components. Programs also included similar concepts and materials, but the intensity and training structure varied. Implemented programs reflected the fact that providers valued different aspects of training over others.

How do local, state, and national factors account for program feature similarities and differences?

This section considers the role of district factors in program development and implementation across districts. A comparison of how district factors shaped program features in each district begins to illustrate how districts mediated federal NCLB teacher quality provisions and state alternative preparation policies as they developed their alternative preparation programs.

Local Teacher Labor Market

As the literature predicts (Feistrizer & Haar, 2008; Rice et al. 2009), the status of the districts' teacher labor market influenced the prevalence and development of programs. The prevalence of alternative programs in the two districts related to their ability, or inability, to meet recruitment goals. Since MCPS filled teacher vacancies through traditional methods (e.g., undergraduate teacher education, teacher transfers), this district had a small number of RTC-related alternative preparation programs that targeted recruitment in specific, hard-to-staff areas. Unable to fill teacher vacancies through traditional methods, PGCPs relied on a number of alternative preparation programs to cast a wide recruitment net to attract and train teachers and to make sure that these teachers were both highly qualified and certified.

The data suggest that the districts' reputations were a primary reason for the difference in the districts' ability to attract teachers and fill teacher vacancies. Recurrent media accounts and most study participants spoke positively about MCPS; they characterized the district as having a positive public image in part because of high student test scores and limited teacher and leadership turnover. Representing a common observation, one study participant indicated that "everybody keeps gravitating to work" in MCPS. Although MCPS did have a small number of struggling schools with low student achievement scores, the study data and other descriptions of MCPS corroborate that many teachers seek employment in MCPS.

Study participants indicated, however, that PGCPs's mixed reputation exacerbated teacher vacancy issues. Study participants pointed to failing schools and media accounts of low performing PGCPs schools (e.g., Chick, 2007) as one reason teachers did not want to teach in PGCPs. Study participants also stated that HR's

inability to hire and process teachers smoothly affected the district's ability to recruit and retain teachers. PGCPs had relatively high teacher turnover in part because many teachers reportedly gravitated toward other D.C. metropolitan school districts that had a "better" reputation.

Teacher Quality Policies

NCLB's teacher quality provisions provided the impetus for MCPS to consider alternative teacher preparation programs while it solidified their use in PGCPs. The state alternative preparation policies provided a vehicle for the districts to use alternative preparation programs to meet NCLB teacher quality requirements. MCPS did not have as many schools receiving federal Title I money and did not have a problem recruiting highly qualified and certified teachers; the data suggest that district leaders did not feel the pressure to institute RTC programs to meet teacher quality guidelines. Conversely, PGCPs had a large number of schools receiving federal Title I money, chronic problems recruiting highly qualified and certified teachers, and intense pressure from the state to improve student achievement scores. The data suggest that the district relied on resident teachers as one way to meet NCLB teacher quality requirements and to demonstrate to the state that it was working to improve student performance. Although the districts used different approaches to meet NCLB provisions, both districts instituted a web of recruitment and retention policies to fill teacher vacancies and to attempt to retain highly qualified and certified teachers by providing professional development opportunities.

Johnson et al. (2005) states that in order for programs to ease career changers' transition into teaching, programs need to provide incentives. Both districts viewed alternative preparation programs as a way to fill teacher vacancies and used financial

incentive policies to attract teachers. Districts differed, however, in the level of investment per candidate and the conceptualization of the investment. In return for districts paying for certification coursework, (in most cases) the districts expected teachers to teach in the district for at least two years. MCPS and PGCPs differed, however, on how to develop and implement these incentives. MCPS district leaders required that programs be at least cost neutral. The cost to train IHE program candidates could not be more than hiring one full-time teacher. MCPS applied this funding standard for all program partnerships including programs designed to assist paraprofessionals to earn an undergraduate degree in education and MCPS teachers seeking advanced certification. PGCPs funded other training programs as well and required a service repayment, but did not mandate that the program be cost neutral.

Although both districts had mentoring and staff development policies in place for all teachers, they did not deliberately align their policies with the alternative programs. In MCPS, alternative programs relied on the district-wide first-year teacher mentoring program; mentors may or may not have known the details of candidates' training. Since MCPS's Office of Staff Development was not directly involved with the alternative programs' training, alternative preparation programs were not closely linked with other staff development policies

In PGCPs, alternative preparation mentors came from a variety of district mentoring programs (e.g., University, Job-alike, itinerant mentors) that operated in various units (Human Resources and Professional Development). Although Human Resources personnel served as the primary contact for and monitor of external partner contracts, Professional Development oversaw the mentoring of many candidates, and

Human Resources oversaw mentoring for the PGCRT program. Multiple PGCPs offices having mentoring oversight complicated program operation and the alignment of mentoring policies with program priorities; candidates in different programs teaching in the same schools received differing mentoring support sometimes from a variety of different sources who may or may not have understood the programs' training models. As in MCPS, PGCPs's Office of Teacher Leadership and Staff Development was not involved specifically with the training of alternative programs. Although both districts utilized alternative preparation programs as a part of their existing retention policies (district mentoring and professional development opportunities), these policies did not necessarily align with the programs' training curricula. Alternative preparation policies coexisted with retention policies, but did not necessarily connect to them. .

Leadership Views

Predictably, the district leaderships' views about alternative teacher preparation and teacher education impacted districts' receptivity to alternative preparation and the type of providers selected to work in each district. Their views reflected the divisive nature of the national teacher education debate (e.g., Cochran-Smith & Fries, 2001) and the passionate discourse about what is "right" for teacher education (Darling-Hammond, 2005; Kanstroom & Finn, 1999; Walsh, 2009). District leaders in both MCPS and PGCPs talked about the relative strengths of alternative teacher preparation and post-baccalaureate teacher education, but had differing opinions about who should be providing the training.

Leaders in MCPS bristled at the mention of alternative certification programs and deemed them "quick and dirty" programs that did not belong in MCPS. In the same

conversation though, the district leaders praised their work with IHE partners to bring individuals who already had a bachelor's degree into teaching. The views of MCPS district leaders predominantly matched with the views of teacher education professionalizers (e.g., Cochran-Smith & Fries, 2005) in that they discussed teachers' need to attend teacher training at IHEs in order to learn the professional body of teaching knowledge.

Top-level PGCPs district leaders praised the use of all forms of alternative teacher preparation and extolled the virtues of various providers. Disagreements between the top-level and mid-level district leaders occurred as to which types of alternative preparation providers the district should use. Top-level leaders maintained that the "portfolio of providers" allowed the district to recruit candidates who stayed in the district longer than other first-year teachers. Mid-level leaders claimed that the internal PGCRT program should be more valued because they recruited more heavily from the Prince George's County community and historically had a higher retention rate than other "outsider" programs. Despite district leaders' differences as to which providers should operate programs, all PGCPs district leaders interviewed professed that the resident teacher programs allowed them to utilize a significant number of individuals labeled as highly qualified and certified teachers to fill teacher vacancies and meet NCLB teacher quality requirements.

The differences in the acceptance of alternative preparation by district leaders reflect the realities in which they operate. MCPS does not have a general problem attracting certified teachers and so they need not rely on alternative preparation programs to meet policy mandates. Conversely, PGCPs does have a problem attracting certified

teachers and sees the highly qualified status of the RTC as a mechanism to meet state and federal policy requirements.

District Organizational Structure/Capacity

Programs in both districts remained largely isolated from district offices during implementation. HR personnel developed programs to meet district hiring priorities and rarely involved other district stakeholders in program development. Structural changes to district departments and changes in leadership impacted program development and implementation by contributing to confusion regarding district oversight responsibilities for alternative preparation programs. In MCPS IHE partnership programs, the district leadership did not delineate departmental oversight responsibilities during the splitting and merging of various offices; although HR created the initial teacher education partnerships studied in this dissertation, previously individuals in the Office of Staff Development had oversight responsibilities for IHE programs. MCPS HR created the programs and did not include individuals from other district offices in the program development and implementation process. In PGCPSS, high turnover in the superintendency and in other key posts contributed to the limited central office involvement in the development and implementation of programs.

Although both districts oversaw the hiring and placement of teacher candidates, the rest of program operation and training largely occurred without input from the district because the HR departments did not include other district offices who were more experienced at program implementation. Therefore, implemented programs reflected the values and mission of the individual provider..

In her study of alternative preparation program implementation, Birkeland (2005) claims that providers have difficulty implementing programs without district support. Birkeland states, “Resources necessary for this [support] may include money to launch a recruitment campaign, faculty who can design and teach a curriculum, established systems for assessment, and the trust and cooperation of school district personnel” (p.56). Although the districts did provide uneven support in certain areas including candidate selection, placement, and mentoring, the relationship between the district and the program typically did not include systematic support during implementation. Districts used alternative programs as a way to meet staffing vacancies and relied on the providers’ capacity to implement programs; this outsourcing permitted district personnel to meet internal priorities without necessarily adding responsibilities to district personnel.

District Size and Socioeconomic Status

The research on district policy implementation suggests that the size and the socioeconomic status of the district might make a difference in program development and implementation. Study participants did not discuss the topic of district size per se, but they did identify a lack of communication across district departments and divisions as hindering program implementation. Whether or not the large size of the districts may have exacerbated communication issues or whether this common problem may be attributed to other factors like organizational reorganization or changing of personnel is an open question.

The community’s socioeconomic status did impact the development of programs. PGCPs was eligible for a number of federal and state program grants due to the large number of students living in poverty; MCPS was not. PGCPs’s need for highly qualified

and certified teachers as well as their eligibility for grant funds fueled program numbers. MCPS did not have an incentive to create programs since they could meet NCLB teacher quality provisions without alternative preparation and they were not eligible for grant money due to the higher overall socioeconomic status of community residents. MCPS created alternative programs because they had very specific, targeted needs in hard-to-staff certification areas.

External Providers

The type of external provider the districts partnered with shaped the development and implementation of programs. The districts' Human Resource personnel essentially bought the product of the provider – a fully certified and highly qualified teacher – without requiring the provider to tailor the program to the district. National programs (e.g., TFA, TNTP, Sylvan) already had priorities in place (e.g., recruit recent college graduates from selective college and universities; create a marketable curricula product) and mechanisms for implementing programs. They hired local teachers and personnel to implement their national program. The local IHE programs reflected what the IHE valued – a professional teacher education program that included depth of study in specific teacher education components (e.g., pedagogical content knowledge). The district-run PGCRT program could have reflected the district's curriculum priorities, but the program implemented the national TNTP training curriculum as well as the retire/rehired mentors' concepts of teaching. Theoretically, national training curriculums may or may not have fit local priorities. Although this study did not yield detailed data about the nature of potential discrepancies, study participants allude to a tension between what the district

and/or state emphasize and what national programs emphasize in their teacher education programs.

Summary

Looking across districts, this analysis supports several cross-cutting findings about district factors. The status of the district's labor market conditions shaped how districts set program parameters. Because MCPS could find highly qualified and certified teachers through traditional recruitment methods, the district could be selective in working only with IHE providers. If providers did not want to meet district parameters, then MCPS would not partner with them. PGCPS did not have this luxury. PGCPS was unable to recruit enough highly qualified and certified teachers through traditional methods and needed the alternative programs to fill teacher vacancies and meet the NCLB policy requirements. PGCPS set a limited number of parameters, worked with an array of providers, afforded providers substantial discretion over program design and delivery, and allowed the providers to dictate others (i.e. program cost).

In neither district did HR departments consistently consult other district stakeholders in the development and implementation of alternative programs. This lack of consultation may have contributed to the confusion regarding program oversight. Structural changes to departments and divisions and limited communication across departments and divisions reportedly exacerbated this confusion and frustration. If programs met state policy requirements and HR parameters, programs were left to develop training largely independently. Although some of the alternative teacher preparation literature suggests that alternative programs could allow districts to greatly

influence teacher education as district officials create programs and partnerships (e.g., Dill, 1996), this study suggests that neither district took advantage of this opportunity.

How do local district policy contexts interact with state and national policy contexts to shape the development and implementation of alternative preparation programs?

Several findings suggest how the districts mediated state and federal policy to develop and implement programs. First, the NCLB highly qualified teacher provisions drove the prevalence and development of programs. Both districts appeared to increase the number of programs and the desire to use resident teachers when individuals using the RTC became both certified and highly qualified. The district had the power to use alternative teacher preparation programs or not. In these cases, both used the opportunity for alternative preparation but to very different degrees.

As Hamann & Lane (2004) claim, the district has an important role in policy mediation between state and federal policies and how and when they reach the school house. In the case of alternative preparation programs in MCPS and PGCPS, the realities of the districts' teacher labor markets and their ability, or inability, to attract and retain teachers helped to determine not only the number of programs in each district, but also the certification status of these candidates. MCPS only had difficulties attracting and retaining highly qualified and certified teachers in hard-to-staff certification areas like mathematics and science. District officials did not need to rely on and had no financial incentive to expand Maryland's alternative certification (RTC) in order to meet NCLB highly qualified teacher requirements; therefore, the district had a small number of initial teacher certification programs and could classify individuals who participated in them as long-term substitutes. PGCPS district officials not only had intense pressure from the

state to increase student achievement scores, but also had widespread difficulties recruiting and retaining certified teachers in nearly every certification area. Due to the highly qualified and certified status of resident teachers, PGCPs funded various alternative preparation providers in part to demonstrate to the state that the district was seeking help from outside providers to precipitate change and in large measure to comply with NCLB highly qualified teacher provisions.

Second, the national teacher education debate and the perceived “quality” of types of alternative preparation providers helped to determine with which providers districts initiated programs. MCPS district officials’ views aligned more with the professionalization view of teaching. Officials interviewed alluded to a worry about tarnishing their image if they worked with alternative programs; they didn’t think the programs were “as good” as more traditional college and university based programs. PGCPs had an image issue, had to demonstrate to the state that they were heeding the seriousness of their corrective action status, and needed to find highly qualified and certified teachers. Utilizing providers that had a positive image nationally and brought them resident teachers could indicate to the state and the public that the district was doing something to address teacher quality issues. This study suggests that the less external pressure exerted on a district to meet the NCLB policy, the more selective it could be and the more parameters it could place on providers.

Third, the state alternative preparation policy requirements and the provider’s theory of action shaped the majority of program training components; district factors had a limited influence. Programs across the districts contained the same general training components and covered many of the same topics. The state policy guidelines required

programs to include pre-employment training, internship, and residency training elements and meet the same national teacher education content standards as other teacher education programs in the state. The content of program training differences occurred in the amount of time devoted to specific concepts and the order in which concepts were introduced. The MCPS RTC-related programs that were not official MAAPPs contained the same components and structures of other programs labeled “alternative.” The state alternative teacher preparation policy requirements and the provider’s theory of action appeared to have determined program training components more than the influence of district factors particularly since the districts did not try to exert influence on program training components.

Although district factors do not appear to have influenced most program training components and structures, the interaction of multiple district factors with the broader policy environment - No Child Left Behind (NCLB) teacher quality provisions, Maryland’s Approved Alternative Preparation Program (MAAPP) policy, Maryland’s Resident Teacher Certificate (RTC) regulations, and the national teacher education debate - did appear to influence aspects of alternative programs and policies.

In sum, the contextual conditions within each district did influence the development and implementation of programs in several ways.

- (a) The district labor market conditions and leadership views helped to determine the districts’ teacher quality policies and the role alternative teacher preparation providers played in the districts. For example, MCPS created partnerships with IHEs in order to meet specific recruitment challenges, but did not create not-for-

profit or for-profit programs because the district leaders did not think highly of these other “alternative” programs.

- (b) The socioeconomic status, district labor market conditions, and leadership views influenced the number of programs as well as the type of provider running programs. PGCPS’s socioeconomic status and large number of uncertified teachers made the district eligible for a number of grants to create alternative preparation programs. Given the top-level leadership’s positive views about alternative preparation and the state pressure to increase student achievement scores, PGCPS initiated a number of programs with a variety of providers.
- (c) The districts’ organizational structure/capacity, size, limited cross-office communication, and the type of provider all influenced program operation. Even the programs that tried to had difficulty permeating the districts’ bureaucracy and ended up operating mostly as independent programs
- (d) The type of provider and leadership views interacted to influence the program entry process. All programs had to meet the minimum state certification policy requirements; some programs increased the required coursework and/or GPA requirements depending on program missions. In addition, the district leadership determined what providers to be used, whether HR staffing specialists would assist in candidate selection, and whether district employees would be involved in program development and delivery.
- (e) The type of provider shaped program training components. As long as programs met state guidelines and district parameters, the districts allowed the providers to implement the design and delivery of program training independently.

- (f) The type of provider appeared to shape program implementation more so than district factors. District staff allowed providers to assume responsibility for program implementation once they met initial district parameters.
- (g) The type of provider shaped each program's theory of action more so than district factors. Providers packaged program components to comply with broad state guidelines and specific district parameters, but given the latitude they retained, they were able to preserve their program's theory of action regarding how teachers should be prepared.
- (h) The type of provider and the labor market conditions were among the major factors shaping program outcomes. The provider's vision of teacher recruitment and retention as well as the ability, or inability, of districts to recruit teachers influenced program outcomes.

The policy implementation literature often states that context matters, but does not unpack how contextual factors influence policy. This study's findings suggest that various district factors combine to influence aspects of program development and implementation as they operate within the broader national and state policy environments. However, the district factors appear to have limited influence after the districts sets initial parameters for programs and providers comply with state and federal guidelines. In this study, the contextual conditions of the districts situated within the broader policy environment set each district up to pay closer attention to aspects of program development and implementation over others. The districts then left the rest of program components – training components, implementation, and theory of action - to the discretion of the provider.

Table 9: Policy Factors Influencing Alternative Preparation Components

Broad Policy Factors	
No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Policy Maryland Approved Alternative Preparation Program (MAAPP) Policy Maryland Resident Teacher Certificate (RTC) Regulation National Teacher Education Debate	
District Factors	Program/District Component Influenced
Labor Market Conditions Leadership Views	Type of Provider District Teacher Quality Policies
Socioeconomic Status Labor Market Conditions Leadership Views	Type of Provider Number of Programs
Organization Structure/Capacity District Size/Communication Type of Provider	Program Operation
Type of Provider Leadership Views	Program Entry Process
Type of Provider	Program Training Component
Type of Provider	Program Implementation
Type of Provider	Program Theory of Action
Type of Provider Labor Market Conditions	Program Outcomes

Conceptual and Methodological Refinements

The findings of this study suggest several conceptual refinements that researchers might use for their analysis of alternative teacher preparation programs and policies. The study suggests ways to refine both the program-level and the district-level frameworks.

The program-level framework was grounded in the broad teacher education literature and in the more focused research on alternative teacher preparation programs. While the program framework appears to be a valid and useful tool to describe alternative teacher preparation, the study data suggest ways to refine some of the program features dimensions. These refinements may help researchers develop more detailed descriptions about program operation, the entry process, and the training components. The following table reiterates the program components and elements utilized in this study and then proposes orienting questions and potential answers to assist in the development of more thorough descriptions of alternative programs.

Table 10: Refinements to Program-Level Framework

Program Component (as described in Chapter 2)	Component Elements (as described in Chapter 2)	Proposed Orienting Questions	Proposed Answers
Program Operation	History		
	Location	Where is the program housed?	Local School or Provider Office
	Stakeholders and Roles	How do the relevant stakeholders carry out their work?	Collaborative or Independent
		Who completes program design and delivery?	District and/or Provider
		What are the functions of those individuals who complete design and delivery?	Program Leader, Mentor and/or Mentor Leader, and/or Teacher Trainer

	Organizational Unit & Oversight	Who controls program design and delivery?	State, District, and/or Provider
	Funding	How does the district fund programs?	District, Grant, and/or Private funds
		What does the district require from candidates in return for funding of their training?	Service Repayment or Not
Entry Process	Target Population and Recruitment	Whom does the program target?	Recent College Graduates, Career Changers, and/or Subject Specific Recruits
		Where does the program recruit?	Local, Regional, National, and/or International
	Requirements	Who sets entry requirements?	State, District, and/or Provider
		What are entry requirements?	Coursework Prerequisites, GPA, Experience, and/or personality traits
	Selection	Who controls candidate selection?	District or Provider
		What is the basis for candidate selection?	Interview, Writing Sample, Teach Lesson, and/or Other
		What characteristics/criteria do interviewers use for candidate selection?	Interviewer Professional Experience and/or Provider Priorities
Training Components			
	Courses	Who determines topics and content to be covered?	State, District, and/or Provider
		What is the coursework structure?	Module-based or Credit-based
		What are the topics covered during training?	Pedagogy, Child Development, Diversity, Action Research, "Beginning Repertoire," Lesson

			Development and Planning, Classroom Management, and/or Other
	Intensity	Who determines the intensity of program training?	State, District, and/or Provider
		What is the time-frame for each program component (i.e. pre-employment training, internship, residency)?	Weeks, Months, or Years
		What is the time-frame for program sequence?	One or Two Years
	Internship/Practica	Who determines internship structure?	State, District, or Provider
		What is the internship structure?	Observation and/or Practice Teaching
		What is the relationship between coursework and internship?	Sequential or Concurrent
	Mentoring	Who provides mentors?	District and/or Provider
		What is the relationship between mentors and programs?	Collaborative or Independent
		What is the role of mentors?	Coaches, Evaluators, Friends, and/or Co-Teachers
		How often does mentoring occur?	Daily, Weekly, and/or As Needed

This study’s proposed district-level framework sought to unpack how context matters in district policy implementation. The policy implementation literature suggests some sensitizing categories that may influence district policy development and implementation, but did not unpack how these factors shape alternative preparation programs. In general, the proposed factors in the framework did hold through the analysis of this study, but with some adjustments. Although the category entitled “district size” did not emerge from the data as a factor in alternative preparation policy development

and implementation, the lack of acknowledgement from study participants could have been because the two districts chosen for this study were of the same relative size.

Communication between district offices and divisions, however, did emerge as a relevant factor. Communication problems may or may not have been exacerbated by the large size of these districts. This study suggests that the “district size” category should remain in the framework for future study, but a “district communication” category should be added to see how this feature of organizations may affect the development and implementation of alternative programs.

In addition, this study supports two methodological observations. First, Maryland may be a useful state in which to study teacher education training across teacher education pathways since both traditional and alternative teacher preparation programs must meet the same state and national content teacher education standards. Some researchers have already begun to consider the similarities and differences between various teacher education pathways across the country and their impact on students (e.g., Grossman & Loeb, 2008; Kane et al., 2007). Studying the training components and structures of the various teacher education pathways within the same state policy context may yield a better understanding of teacher education training and the potential influence of individual district contexts on teacher training and education.

Second, at the outset of the study, I assumed that the study participants (program implementers and district officials) would be able to speak in some detail about the programs’ content. That assumption did not hold. Participants could speak about some aspects of the programs, but could not recount the content of courses or training sessions. In order to obtain a clearer picture of alternative preparation coursework and the

alignment between stated goals and actual implementation, observations of program training should be completed as an integral part of data collection. As programs mature and gather more data, researchers may be able to examine the relationships between program features to outcomes to ascertain how program features relate to quality alternative preparation programs.

In summary, the purpose of this study was to add to the alternative teacher preparation literature by seeking to understand how local factors interacted with national and state factors to influence the development and implementation of alternative teacher preparation programs and policies. These alternative teacher preparation programs are a prominent feature of the debates about how to address problems associated with the supply and distribution of high quality teachers however that construct may be defined. In an effort to address key gaps in the literature on these programs, this cross-case analysis sought to describe and contextualize these programs. While the study is a point of departure, it is a fruitful orientation for developing a deeper understanding of the factors influencing alternative preparation policies and programs.

Appendix A:
Interview Protocols

Semi-Structured Interview Guide – District Official

Professional Background

Tell me about your professional background (e.g. education, experience, specialized expertise).

Tell me about the major responsibilities of your position.

- What, if any, relationship do you have to alternative teacher preparation programs?

Perception of Teaching Staffing Issues

Describe teacher staffing in the district.

- Does the district have difficulty meeting the need?

How does the district respond to teacher staffing issues (i.e., shortages, quality)?

- types of programs?
- kinds of resources? amount?

How has this response changed since HQT and approved program requirements?

How does your district utilize the Maryland Resident Teacher Certificate?

- How, if at all, is this different than in the past?

Description of Alternative Preparation Programs

Tell me about current initial certification programs in your district.

- Who are the stakeholders involved (i.e., university/college, private provider)?
- How long have the programs existed?
- How are they funded?
- Who is the targeted population?
- How would you describe the quality of these programs and their graduates? What might you attribute this to?

Open-ended Appraisal

What do you see as the major strengths and weaknesses of these programs?

How have people (administrators, teachers, staff, parents, community residents, district officials) responded to alternative preparation efforts?

Information Sources

Who else do you recommend that I talk to about your district's alternative preparation efforts?

Semi-Structured Interview Guide – Program Owner

Professional Background

Tell me about your professional background (e.g. education, experience, specialized expertise).

Tell me about the major responsibilities of your position.

- What relationship do you have to alternative teacher preparation programs?

Partnership

Tell me about the relationship between PGCPS and UMCP.

- What types of partnerships currently exist and have existed in the past?

Tell me about how the Oxon Hill program came to be in PGCPS.

Description of Alternative Preparation Programs

How do the MCPS and PGCPS programs compare? Similarities and differences?

- Why do the candidates receive certification differently?

What do you see as the major strengths and weaknesses of this program and/or model?

How have people (administrators, teachers, staff, parents, community residents, district officials) responded to efforts at Oxon Hill?

Information Sources

Who else do you recommend that I talk to about Master's Certification in MCPS or PGCPS?

Mentor Focus Group Questions:

1. Which program(s) are you working with?
2. What are the strengths of that program and model?
3. What are the weaknesses of that program and model?
 - Can you tell the difference between candidates in different programs?

How so?

4. Tell me about the major responsibilities of your position as a mentor.
 - What kinds of training, if any, have you had for this position?
5. Could a couple of you describe a mentoring session?
 - What other kinds of things might happen in a session?
6. What are some common problems that have come up?
 - How do you solve problems with a candidate?
 - How do you know if a candidate has taken your advice?
7. In general, what primary strengths do candidates bring to teaching?
8. In general, what are their most obvious weaknesses?
9. Is there anything you'd like to tell me about your work with resident teachers that I haven't asked?

If time:

How have the principals and other teachers reacted to resident teachers?

Teacher Focus Group Questions:

1. What made you decide to enter a resident teacher program and Prince George's County?
2. Do you see teaching as your long-term career choice? Why or why not?
3. Describe your summer training.
 - What did the day look like?
 - What types of classes did you take?
 - What did the internship look like?
4. Describe your relationship with your mentor.
 - What does a typical mentoring session look like?
 - Is their feedback helpful, why or why not?
 - Are there any other supports in the building that you utilize?
 - Is their feedback helpful? Why or why not?
5. Describe the ongoing sessions during the school year.
 - What do you talk about?
 - Are they useful? Why or why not?
6. How is your teaching going?
 - Do you feel like you can help your students succeed? Why or why not?
 - Do you understand your role in the school?
 - data utilization meetings
 - grade level meetings
7. What are the strengths of your RT program?
8. What are the weaknesses of the RT program?

Is there anything else that you'd like to tell me about the RT program.

Appendix B:

Documents

Item:	Category:
JHU List of classes	Classes
Montgomery College ACET syllabus	Classes
TTT syllabus	Classes
TNTP Content Seminar Syllabi	Classes
TNTP summer curriculum	Classes
PGCRT training schedule summer and school-year	Classes
TFA training curriculum	Classes
Montgomery County TTT program folder	County Policy document
Prince George's Human Resources Resident Teacher Retention Report	County Policy document
http://quickfacts.census.gov	Demographics
www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org	Demographics
www.pgcps.org	Demographics
- 2002-04	MSDE
- 2004-06	MSDE
- 2005-07	MSDE
- 2006-08	MSDE
- 2008-10	MSDE
MSDE MAAPP Directory	MSDE
MSDE Academic Policy Memo for Potential Teachers	MSDE
MSDE Guidelines for Implementing Approved Alternative Preparation Programs (2007)	MSDE
MSDE RTC Academic Policy Memo (2007)	MSDE
MSDE RTC Regulation 13A.12.01.07	MSDE
MSDE Request for Proposals, Answers and Questions (2005)	MSDE
MSDE Frequently Asked Questions, Part 2 (2006)	MSDE
MSDE MAAPP Question and Answer (2007)	MSDE
MSDE MAAPP Brochure (2007)	MSDE
MSDE Alternative Teacher Preparation Program Proposal (2009)	MSDE
MSDE MAAPP Preconditions (2007)	MSDE
MSDE MAAPP Standards of Practice (2009)	MSDE
MSDE MAAPP Guidelines (2009)	MSDE
MSDE MAAPP Annual Reporting Template (2009)	MSDE
Maryland Teacher Staffing Reports	MSDE
http://msp2007.msde.state.md.us/	MSDE
Itinerant Mentor Meeting Notes 01.08.08	Observations

PGCRT Mentor Meeting Notes 01.10.08	Observations
Cross-Program Meeting Notes 11.27.07	Observations
PGCRT Steering Committee Meeting Notes 12.12.07	Observations
PGCRT Recruitment Session 10.16.07	Observations
Master's Meeting at Tulip Grove	Observations
Challenge Index -http://www.newsweek.com/id/39380/?q=2007/	Other
www.ets.org	Other
www.alt-teachercert.org/	Other
www.teach-now.org	Other
- Program description	Program Design
- Program proposal	Program Design
PGCRT MAAPP proposal	Program Design
MCERT MAAPP proposal	Program Design
LINC federal proposal	Program Design
www.residentteacherprogram.org	Program Design
www.tntp.org	Program Design
www.teachforamerica.org	Program Design
www.education.umd.edu/EDCI/MCERT	Program Design
https://www.montgomerycollege.edu/wdce/acet/acet.html	Program Design
http://education.jhu.edu/teach/promat/	Program Design
www.education.umd.edu	Program Design
www.pgcteachingfellows.org	Program Design
Johns Hopkins University Recruitment Folder	Recruitment
- Introduction letter	Recruitment
www.residentteacherprogram.org	Recruitment
www.tntp.org	Recruitment
www.teachforamerica.org	Recruitment
www.education.umd.edu/EDCI/MCERT	Recruitment
https://www.montgomerycollege.edu/wdce/acet/acet.html	Recruitment
http://education.jhu.edu/teach/promat/	Recruitment
www.pgcteachingfellows.org	Recruitment
MCPS Partnership Programs Brochures	
MCPS Projected Teacher Numbers 2008-2009	
MARCO Final Evaluation	
LINC Final Evaluation	

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