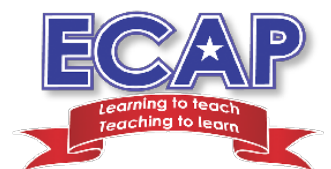




How To Choose The Right Alternative Certification Program

Learning To Teach
Teaching To Learn

www.ecapteach.com



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Best Alternative Certification Program In Texas

If you have ever looked into becoming a Texas teacher, then no doubt you have heard of the top three Texas Alternative Teacher Certification Programs...Texas Teachers, ITeach and ECAP. But which is the best alternative teaching certification program Texas?

At first glance, they may all appear the same. They all have an application process, a training program, and field support to help you on your path to certification. These components are all mandated by the State of Texas.

So, how do you know which one is right for you?

By delving a little deeper into all three programs, you will notice some subtle differences that can make or break your experience.

Here are some ways you can tell what those differences are and which one may be right for you:



It Starts With A Phone Call

You've been doing your research online about how to become a Texas teacher, but you aren't quite sure about things.

You just feel like you need to talk to a "real person" and make sure you are on the right track. So, you make a call to one of the three certification programs. Here are some things to consider about the call:

How long did the call last?

- Did they sound like they were reading from a script?
- Did they try to rush you off the phone, because they didn't know the answers to your questions?
- Did they tell you that you need to talk to someone else, but they weren't available right then?
- Did they try to "hard sell" you right there and then?
- Did they tell you it is easy, all you have to do is put down a deposit and you can start with the first online course now?

Or,

- Did they take the time to make you feel that you were important?
- Did they give you suggestions that showed they had your best interests in mind?
- Did they walk you through the process, so you left knowing what you need to do?

Tip #1: Don't rush into a decision before talking to all three programs.

Why? Because you are going to be working with this company and these people for close to a year, and you need to make sure it is the right decision for you.

Lou Holtz once said, "I follow three rules: Do the right thing, do the best you can, and always show people you care."

Tip #2: After you have made all three calls, figure out which one followed Lou's golden rules. You will get more personal attention and care from them.

Training Is Important

You know that you need to get 300 hours of training as part of getting a Texas teacher certification. And, just the thought of that seems daunting.

So, you think to yourself, “It would be great if I could do it all online. That way I can do it on my own time.”

While that may sound great, here are some things to consider about training:

- **Online training doesn’t allow you to ask questions**
- **Online training doesn’t allow you to have personal connections during training**
- **Online training doesn’t allow you to benefit from being physically involved in the process**
- **Online training doesn’t allow you to meet the trainers who are inspiring you**
- **Online training doesn’t allow your program staff to know you and how they can best support you**
- **Online training doesn’t allow you to establish lifelong friendships with people you train with**

Tip #3: Your training should consist of a combination of online and in-person training.

Why? Because when you get to the classroom, you will be better prepared to teach students having experienced the difference between watching to learn and being involved in the learning process.

Benjamin Franklin once said, “Tell me and I forget, teach me and I may remember, involve me and I learn.”

Tip #4: Look for a program that offers a combination of online and in-person training. You will learn more and meet people who can serve as resources throughout your career.



Field Support Is Your Lifeline

As a new teacher on the job, you will need and are required to have in-field support. You will struggle and get frustrated on the job. Having a good advisor there to help makes a huge difference.

Here is what you should know about field support:

- **Your Trainer Advisor is there to make you a successful teacher**
- **Who that person is and how much time and energy they put into you is key**
- **Not all programs have the same view about what makes a great advisor**

Tip #5: Programs that are proud of their Trainer Advisors will promote who they are on their website along with their credentials.

Why? Because they know how important this piece of your training is in making you an effective and dynamic teacher for your students, and you need to know who they are.

An anonymous author once wrote, "It is so essential to surround yourself with individuals who are already where you want to be. Iron sharpens iron."

Tip #6: A quality program will go out and recruit the best retired administrators. Administrators have experience working with different teaching styles and won't try to mold you into the teaching style of one particular individual. They also understand the requirements of all of the different subjects.

Get Another Opinion

The program you choose will have an impact on your first teaching experience. It can be positive or it can be really frustrating. And, learning from other people's experiences is the best way to confirm whether your instincts about each program are correct.

Here are some ways to get another opinion:

- **Talk to friends who have gotten certified or know people who have gotten certified from one of the top three Alternative Certification Programs and ask them about their experience**
- **Go online and read reviews, but take into account which complaints are fair and reasonable**
- **Go to teaching job fairs to meet people that know about all three programs and ask questions**
- **Contact the school district you want to teach in to find out which program they like to hire from and ask why**

Tip #7: It's up to you to ask questions. Bigger doesn't necessarily mean better.

Eleanor Roosevelt once said, "Learn from the mistakes of others. You can't live long enough to make them all yourself."

Tip #8: There are people out there who have valuable information about all three programs. If you don't ask their opinion, you may have to live with consequences you didn't anticipate.

The PPR Test Preparation is Your Last Hurdle

Tip #9: It is important to see what PPR training each program offers.

Some programs expect you to do it yourself online. Other programs will offer a one-day training course for an additional cost. And, still other programs include a one-day training course in the cost of your program.

Arthur Ashe once said, "One important key to success is self-confidence. An important key to self-confidence is preparation."

Tip #10: A quality program will offer a one-day training course as part of their program and at no extra charge, because they know that you will have a greater chance of success in passing the test if you are well prepared.

It seems like forever that you have been working to get your teaching certificate. You have passed your content test, done your 300 hours of training and been working tirelessly in the classroom at your first teaching job. You are tired.

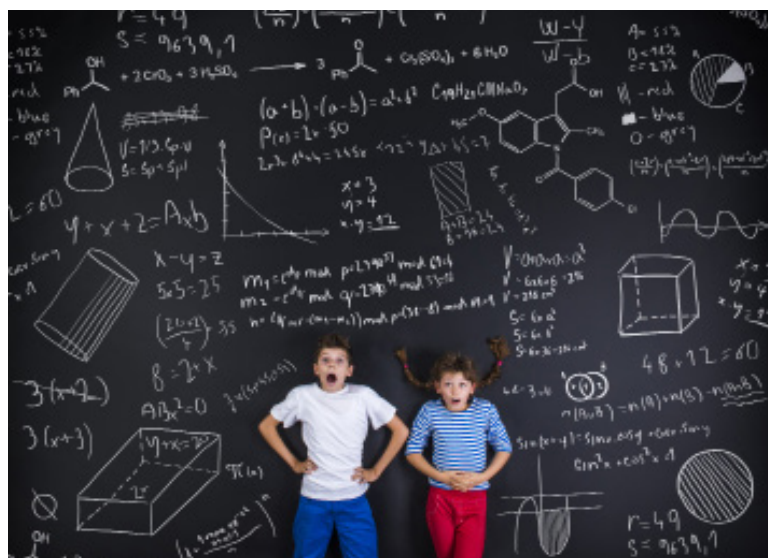
But, you still have one hurdle to get over.

In order to get your Texas standard teaching certificate, you must pass the Texas Examinations of Educator Standards (TExES) Pedagogy and Professional Responsibilities (PPR) test. This is typically one of the last things you do, because you need to apply knowledge from your classroom experience.

The TExES PPR exam measures a test taker's knowledge of educational theory and pedagogy. This computer-based exam includes 100 multiple-choice questions to be completed over the course of a 5-hour testing session. Content covers four key domains or teaching skills that are expected of certified educators in Texas public or charter schools:

- **Instruction and assessment design**
- **Classroom management**
- **Implementation of instruction and assessment**
- **Educators' professional responsibilities**

There are two ways to prepare for this test...online or a one-day training course.



Read Before You Sign

It is important to read your contract before you sign it. It can actually cost you money, if you aren't happy with your choice.

Here are some things to consider about contracts:

- **If you haven't signed the contract and they have given permission to TEA for you to take your content test, you are not obligated to sign a contract with that company**
- **Don't start any courses or sign any contracts until you have thoroughly read the terms of the contract**
- **Look for any language that puts you on the hook for owing large amounts of money early in the process or if you want to change programs**

Tip # 11: Let the buyer beware.

Why? Because once you sign the contract, you may not be able to get out.

Friedrich Nietzsche once said, "They muddy the water, to make it seem deep."

Tip # 12: You could get stuck with a program you don't like, because there are financial costs involved in getting out of the contract.

Which Program Is Best?

As you may have already guessed, it depends on what is important to you. However, if you have a passion or calling to become a teacher, then you need to look for the program that will give you the best possible start to your career. Look for a program that has a mix of online and in-person training. A good in-person training program should include:

- **Teaching for Critical Thinking**
- **Lesson Planning**
- **TEKS for Secondary**
- **Reading in the Content**
- **Teaching to Your Strengths**
- **Behavior Management**
- **Teaching in Urban Schools**
- **Special Education Issues**
- **Poverty in Schools**
- **Parent Conferencing**
- **Adolescent Development**
- **Trainer Advisors that put you first**

Online training can only prepare you so much. Look at each program carefully, talk to their staff and especially talk to school districts. Remember, they are the ones who are going to hire you, so why not find out which accredited program they love to hire from first!

Pricing

Comparing and contrasting the prices of each program, you will see that all of the programs are within a couple of hundred dollars of each other. It is important to do your due diligence and find out what is included in each program. Also, some programs may charge you extra, if you don't complete your training program in 6 months. So, find out before you apply.

	ECAP	ITeach	Teachers of Tomorrow
Application Fee:	\$0	\$0	\$0
Enrollment Fee:	*\$200	\$250	\$295
Internship/Teaching Fee:	\$390 *10 Monthly Installments	\$425 *10 Monthly Installments	\$435 *10 Monthly Installments
Total:	\$4,350	\$4,500	\$4,645

* Fee is paid through monthly installments after you are hired.

Type Of Course Each Program Offers

It is important to give yourself options. You may have the greatest of intentions to do all of your training on-line, but if you get behind, it is great to have the option of in-class training, too. That is why we recommend applying to a program that offers both.

	ECAP	ITeach	Teachers of Tomorrow
Online Training:	X	X	X
In Class Training:	X		X



Sharon Fikes

The founder and heart of ECAP alternative certification program."



Mikah Fikes

Micah surrendered to his true calling as an educator and went to work for the family business.



Scott Fikes

Scott is the expert in the ECAP family. If he doesn't know it, it probably doesn't exist.



Sheryl Woods

Sheryl's wealth of experience in the education field is second to none.



Leslie Natarelli

Leslie is the office manager. She runs the ECAP office and keeps everyone in line.



Lindsey McCullough

Lindsey handles program support and will be involved with your certification process a lot.

Each ECAP consultant holds a valid Texas teaching certificate, as well as an advanced degree in education. In addition to this, each of our senior leaders has 30+ years in the teacher certification field, perfecting our processes and curriculum. In short, we are experienced, capable and time tested.

Final Thoughts

There have been thousands of teachers in Texas who have come out of the top three Alternative Certification Programs...Teachers Of Tomorrow, ITeach and ECAP. There are two questions you need to ask yourself..."What kind of program do I want?" and "What kind of teacher do I want to be?"

In the words of Sharon Fikes, the founder of ECAP:

"For us, this isn't just about putting teachers in the classroom. Not everyone is meant to be a teacher. That's why we aren't looking for people who just want to go through the motions in order to get a job. We are looking for people who have a calling and a passion for teaching students."

This is about the kids. They are our future generations, and we have a responsibility to deliver teachers into their classrooms who will teach them, nurture them and inspire their dreams!"

The program you choose will determine whether your teacher certification process is a positive one or not. Our reputation is well known throughout the state of Texas. We have developed a very well-respected training program that puts students ahead of the curve when it's time to hire.

Let us help you get that teaching job you have been waiting for!

Apply Now!