



Additional Certification for Teachers in New York State: Teachers' Experience and Employment Location, Certification Pathways, and Certification Areas

In New York State, 10 subject areas faced geographically widespread and persistent shortages of certified teachers from 2015/16 to 2017/18.¹ One option to address shortages is for certified teachers to earn additional certificates related to shortage areas. Using employment and certification data for experienced teachers (those with at least one year of teaching experience in New York State) in 2015/16, this study, conducted in partnership with the New York State Education Department (NYSED), examined which teachers earned additional certificates, through which pathways, and in which certification areas between October 2015 and October 2017.

Key findings

- **About 5 percent of experienced teachers in 2015/16 earned additional certificates between October 2015 and October 2017, and these teachers had fewer years of teaching experience in New York State on average (7 years) than teachers who did not earn additional certificates (15 years).** NYSED could explore whether additional certificate holders use their new credentials to fill shortage area vacancies.
- **More than half of experienced teachers who earned additional certificates did so through the traditional in-state pathway, while about a third did so through the individual evaluation pathway.** The individual evaluation pathway was most commonly used by additional certificate holders in career and technical education (73 percent). Future research could examine why these teachers use that pathway.
- **Special education was the most common shortage certification area in which experienced teachers earned additional certificates.** Higher proportions of additional certificate holders who held baseline certificates in early childhood education (70 percent), special education (44 percent), and childhood education (39 percent) earned additional certificates in special education than in other areas. Further research is needed to determine whether additional certificate holders teach in the subject areas of their additional certificate.
- **More teachers earned additional certificates in shortage areas (47 percent) than in nonshortage areas (25 percent), except administration (36 percent), which is a nonteaching certification area.** With many teachers earning additional certificates in administration, a nonteaching certification area, NYSED and districts might explore how to encourage some to pursue certifications in shortage areas instead.

This study cannot support causal inferences about the relationships among certification pathways, certification areas, and employment location. The study also did not address the extent to which teachers were employed in course assignments related to their specific certification area. Future research could address this.

¹ These areas are bilingual education, bilingual special education, career and technical education, English language arts, health education, library media specialist, literacy, mathematics, science, and special education (U.S. Department of Education [n.d.]. Teacher shortage areas. Retrieved March 13, 2020, from <https://tsa.ed.gov/#/reports>.) This study examined certification areas related to shortage areas, and these are referred to as “shortage certification areas” throughout the report.