"I Want More": Does a Divide Between Charter and Public School Teachers Cause Different Desires for Certification Programs?

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Abstract

The number of teachers entering the profession through alternative certification and the number of charter schools in the United States have increased over the past twenty years. While there is a great deal of research on the efficacy of different paths to certification on teachers in public schools, there is little research exploring the needs of charter school teachers in alternative certification programs. This study uses a longitudinal data set of 44 matched-pair beginning teachers by school type who are all alternatively certified to explore the divide between public and charter school teachers. Almost universally, teachers reported wanting the same elements present in their alternative certification programs: accountability, assignments based on research rather than self-reflection, and an emphasis on skills that were concrete and immediately usable in the classroom.

Key words: *charter schools, alternative certification, best practices, charter school teachers, teacher education*

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Introduction

There has been a great deal of research that focused on the effects of differing certification programs on teachers in the United States. Simply put, there are two ways that a teacher can earn certification for PK-12 classrooms: through traditional certification from a school of education earned before entering the classroom or through alternative certification. Alternative certification is usually pursued while simultaneously teaching and can come from a variety of routes: through a state-based portfolio system, through a program at a university, through a district-based program, or through some other state-approved non-governmental organization. As of 2009, there are approximately 600 different routes to alternative certification in the United States (Feistritzer, 2009). The research on the effects of teacher certification has spanned the past twenty-five years, and has found a variety of results. Some researchers showed that being certified before entering the classroom has a positive effect on student achievement and teacher tenure (cf. Darling-Hammond, 1999; Shen, 1997), some have found either a neutral or positive effect to being alternatively certified (c.f., Decker, Mayer, & Glazerman, 2004; Goldhaber & Brewer, 2000), and one quantitative paper found that the inter-program variation was so high that the distinction of being alternatively or traditionally certified was not meaningful (Constantine et al., 2009). There is a plethora of research on best practices to educate beginning teachers in traditional and alternative certification programs; however, this research has not differentiated between public[1] and charter school teachers, or compared the two groups.

This state of the research likely reflects the comparatively small numbers of teachers in charter versus public schools. Currently, less than 3 percent of schools and teachers are affiliated with charter schools (National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), 2003-2008), but that number is growing. Considering charter schools began in the early 1990s, they have exploded in number and popularity in the past 20 years. Since charter school teachers educated about 1.8 million students at 5274 different schools in 2010-2011 (NCES, 2010-2011), it would be helpful to see how both current charter and public school teachers view their certification programs. In order to address this gap in perspectives, this article answers the following research questions: Both generally and in the schools we studied, are charter school and public school teachers a different population quantitatively or do they consider themselves different qualitatively? If so, does this thereby necessitate a separation in the research on their certification needs? If a separation is needed, do they value a type of certification program, or elements within certification programs, differently by school type (charter vs. public)?

Charter schools are, by definition, highly individualistic institutions. Some are independent schools, run and managed by a single administrator or set of administrators. Some are connected and run by a multi-state network (KIPP and Achievement First schools are well known examples of this). Some focus on a particular theme, such as technology or character education, while others are more general. Therefore, in order to answer fully any research question about them, it is necessary to become increasingly fine-grained in the data to gain authenticity or validity. That is, running a quantitative analysis that combines all charter school teachers or charter schools together as one group and comparing it to an undifferentiated or unmatched group of public school teachers may not be as accurate as a qualitative analysis that enters similar public and

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[1] While charter schools are funded by public money, and could therefore be considered public schools, to avoid confusion we use the term "public school" in this paper only to refer to non-charter public schools.

charter schools to gauge and compare their structures and community and listen to individuals. Such fieldwork also values the voices of the teachers, and their opinions about how certification affects them, rather than relying on the often-used student standardized test scores or teacher tenure measures as indicators of teacher/certification success. Therefore, this study sought to answered these research questions through a year-long investigation of 44 beginning teachers (those who had less than 5 years of total teaching experience; most had less than three years) at 11 different charter schools and public schools (6 charter, 5 public). All of these teachers were either enrolled in or had recently (within a year) completed an alternative certification program. To gain a fuller perspective, the school sample contained both independent and networked charter schools that ranged in institutional age from four to nine years and public schools that were all at least 20 years old.

Overall, the authors found not only a quantitative difference between teachers by school type, but also that the teachers themselves believed there was a large gap in administrative support, teacher goals, and even ability to teach. This large quantitative and qualitative gap led us to mistakenly expect that teachers would want different characteristics and structures from alternative certification programs, but this was incorrect. Overall, both teacher types reported that they wanted certification programs to demand more of them, and to be focused on student success.

Literature on Charter Schools and Teacher Certification

Charter Schools
Charter schools in the United States are considered "schools of choice," which are schools that individuals must choose to attend over their local public schools. As of 2010, there are currently 39 states, plus the District of Columbia, which have legislation that allows for charter schools, with Minnesota enacting the first law allowing for charter schools in 1991. As of 2010, there were 5274 charter schools in operation, enrolling approximately 1.8 million K-12 students (to put this in perspective, in 2010-2011, there were 98,817 public schools in America that enroll 49 million K-12 students) (NCES 2010-2011).

Charter schools are founded upon a charter, or contract, with the local department of education that states that the school will take a given amount of students from a population (or catchment zone) and then achieve and maintain a given score on the state standardized tests and attendance rates after a certain amount of time (usually three to five years). If these scores are not achieved by that point in time, the school may be put under a higher level of state or city supervision, or may be closed down and the pupils dispersed. About 10 percent of charter schools have been closed down since the concept was conceived in 1991, but this percentage also includes those schools that have closed for financial, administrative, or other reasons (Renzulli & Roscigno, 2007).

Originally, charter schools did not have to follow teacher certification guidelines, but 2001's *No Child Left Behind* (*NCLB*) mandated "highly qualified" teachers in charter schools if the state charter school laws did not specify otherwise. This "highly qualified" designation has pragmatically become synonymous with being a "certified teacher" in state law. Seventeen states have charter school laws that specify that all charter school teachers must be certified, three

specify that none have to be certified (at the moment, these states are Texas, Georgia, and Arizona), and 19 state laws specify that some percentage of the teachers in a school need to be certified, or that the schools may apply individually for exceptions from *NCLB*. All of the teachers in this study came from states/regions that required charter school teacher certification (New York, Connecticut, and the District of Columbia).

Generally, research has found that charter schools either have a negative or neutral effect on student achievement, after controlling for student background (Bettinger, 2005; Bifulco & Ladd, 2006) and an initial school start-up period (Hanushek, Kain, Rivkin, & Branch, 2007). Some studies have also examined the effect of charter schools on the public schools in the same district to determine if there is a "creaming effect" that removes students with active or knowledgeable parents and negatively impacts the public school. The findings are geographically specific and split: in Michigan, Ni (2009) found that the initial impact of establishing a charter school on its neighboring public school was slightly lowered student achievement scores for the public school in the short term, but that these short term effects could compound to significantly impact the public school's scores over time. However, Bettinger (2005) also found that charter schools in Michigan had no impact on their neighboring schools, similar to Bifulco and Ladd's (2006) conclusion about charter schools in North Carolina. Sass (2006) concluded that charter schools might account for slightly higher mathematics scores in neighboring public schools in Florida. The lack of consensus about the effects of charter schools on their own students' achievement and on the test scores of their neighboring public schools suggests that statements about charter schools and their effects should be at least geographically specific to the state level, if not further, given the results in Michigan.

In addition to that geographic specificity, there is some evidence that the type of charter school should be taken into account (i.e., whether the school is independent of any affiliation, affiliated with a school district or university, or affiliated with a network). Braun, Jenkins, and Grigg (2006) controlled for both student and school characteristics to find that the mean standardized test scores for charter school students in both reading and mathematics were about five points below those of public school students. When they differentiated the charter schools into those affiliated with the local school district and those not affiliated with any entity, the scores of each were still below the mean public school scores, although less so for the affiliated charter schools (Braun et al., 2006). In addition to this affiliated/non-affiliated distinction, previous research on teachers in charter schools has not always accounted for the "networked" versus "non-networked" difference in charter schools. Networked charter schools may take advantage of their size and network strength to recruit or train differently from non-network, independent schools that do not have their budgets or organizational skills. This differentiation between types of charter schools by affiliation may suggest that a more in-depth qualitative analysis may yield different results than quantitative analyses done of the whole.

Teacher Certification
A Nation at Risk, the report that documented America's increasingly poor standardized test scores as compared to both previous generations and international peers, was published in 1983. This report, and others with similar findings, sparked numerous educational reforms and research projects that attempted to answer two questions: Why are American schools failing? What could be done to solve this education crisis? Some researchers (e.g., Caldas & Bankston, 1997; Sirin,

2005) have long pointed to differential school funding based partially on local property taxes as one of the possible culprits. Others held education professionals, usually teachers, as responsible. Teacher quality was pointed to as one of the biggest factors impacting student achievement, but was measured through varying ways: teacher scores on standardized tests (Ferguson & Ladd, 1995; Greenwald, Hedges, & Laine, 1996; Hedges & Greenwald, 1996), attendance at selective colleges (Monk & King, 1994; Ehrenberg & Brewer, 1995), years of experience (Greenwald et al., 1996; Hanushek, Kain, & Rivkin, 1998), and/or state certification (e.g., Darling-Hammond, 1999). This last proxy for teacher quality, despite controversy about its validity, has been *de facto* accepted by the federal and state legislatures so much so that a public school teacher must now either enter the classroom already certified by the state, or become certified within three to five years.

There are currently two ways for teachers to gain certification in the United States: through "traditional certification" (TC), which requires a degree from a school of education at a university and the accompanying fieldwork/training before entering the classroom, or through "alternative certification" (AC), an increasingly popular option. AC is done through a state-approved program that prepares teachers usually while they are simultaneously teaching. It may be done through an approved independent entity, through a university-sponsored program, or through a program that the state itself runs. Each requires a bachelor's degree from an accredited college before the individual can enter any type of certification program. The teachers in this study were all enrolled or had recently graduated from AC programs, although the sample does include three teachers who had also completed a traditional certification program, then entered an alternative certification program to gain greater skill or expertise, and/or to satisfy state requirements.

Two time periods revolutionized teacher certification in the United States: September 1983 and September 2002. In September 1983, Saul Cooperman, the Education Commissioner of New Jersey, proposed a reform that would allow individuals to enter the classroom directly and gain certification while teaching (Van Tassel, 1983). This was essentially the first alternative route for teacher certification in the United States. Cooperman's proposal led to the current two track certification system in place. Alternative certification programs grew in popularity over the next seven years, and "by 1990, 33 states provided for alternative teacher certification" (Hawley, 1990, p. 3) with an additional 15 states planning for it. Now, all 50 states, Puerto Rico, and Washington, DC, allow for some form of alternative certification of teachers. As of 2007, it is estimated that about a third of new teachers are hired through alternative certification programs (Feistritzer, 2009; *School and Staffing Survey*, *SASS*, 2007-2008). September 2002 marked the implementation of 2001's *NCLB*, which mandated that all teachers in public schools, including charter schools, unless the state law specified otherwise, had to either enter the classroom already certified through traditional means or be working toward gaining alternative certification within a specified time period from their start date.

Since about one-third of our nation's teachers now enter the field through alternative certification programs, it is important to understand both the effects on the teachers who participate in said programs and on the students those teachers directly affect. There have been some studies that suggested that AC teachers are of lower quality than TC teachers upon examining student outcomes (Darling-Hammond, 1999) or teacher characteristics (Shen, 1997), but other studies

that have suggested a neutral or positive outcome for their students (Bliss, 1990; Goldhaber & Brewer, 2000; Decker, Mayer, & Glazerman, 2004). A report from the U.S. Department of Education (Constantine et al., 2009) discussed the results from a quasi-experimental study in which AC and TC teachers were matched within schools for years of experience and previous schooling, then had students randomly assigned to them. In general, Constantine et al. (2009) found that there was so much diversity in teacher training for both TC and AC candidates, in terms of number of hours and types of courses, that there was more within group variation than between group variation and that there was no statistical difference between the two groups for college achievement of the teachers or the standardized test score performance for the students.

Along with the rise in the rates of AC (estimates vary, but the rate of teachers entering through an AC program has grown to about 30-35% in 2007 from none in 1983),[2] there has been a rise in the percent of children attending charter schools and the number of those schools. For charter school data since 2003, see Table 1. There has been little research done on the effect of the type of teacher certification on charter schools, their teachers, and their students. One exception to this statement is a privately published policy paper that found that being uncertified led to a higher risk of charter school teacher attrition at the end of the school year (Miron & Applegate, 2007).

Table 1
Information on Charter and Public Schools from 2003 to 2008

Year	# Charter Schools	# Public Schools	# students charter K-12	Total # students K-12	% K-12 students at charter
2003-2004	2179	88113	627,000	47,316,000	1.32513315
2004-2005	3294	90001	887,243	47,694,443	1.86026494
2005-2006	3780	97382	1,012,906	48,912,085	2.07087062
2006-2007	4132	98793	1,157,359	49,065,594	2.35879953
2007-2008	4388	98916	1,276,731	48,910,025	2.61036669

Source:
U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, *Schools and Staffing Survey* (*SASS*), "Public School Questionnaire," 2003–2008; and "Public Teacher Questionnaire," 2003–2008.

Methodology

This article's qualitative data are primarily drawn from repeated teacher interviews and fieldwork, but the second author was also an instructor for several teachers at an AC program run at a large university. This allowed her to have consistent and informal contact with beginning teachers and informed the research questions and sample selection, although none of her students were included in this sample. For more information on specific numbers and backgrounds of the teachers, see Table 2.

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[2] These estimates differ widely by state. However, generally, the nation-wide 2007 *SASS* gives an estimate of approximately 30%. Feistritzer (2009) concurs, using an estimate of one-third.

Table 2
Sample Description

	Charter	Public	Total
Number of teachers in sample	25 (17 networked, 8 non-networked)	19	44
Enrolled in Portfolio-Based, Govt. Cert. Program	10	8	18
Enrolled in Ed School Alt Cert Program	4	8	12
Enrolled in NGO Program	10	4	14
Gender of teachers (m/f)	4/21	3/16	7/37

Teachers ($N = 44$) were recruited from both networked and non-networked charter schools in Connecticut, New York, and Washington, DC, and from public schools in the same districts. First, the authors constructed a list of local charter schools that might allow access to their teachers either because of a reputation for accessibility or because of socio-professional contacts. When necessary, the school administration was "cold called" through email or phone calls. Then, the teacher sample was gathered through contacting the school administration, asking if there were any beginning teachers who were enrolled in or had recently completed a certification program. Next, the authors talked to those teachers and had them provide introductions to others in similar situations, or perhaps in the same certification programs. In that way, we were able to more easily establish a rapport with respondents through referral from other trusted personnel. For those still in certification programs that required in-person attendance, we asked for permission to attend with the teachers, and were able to do so at two different programs on five different occasions.

To collect the sample, teachers were first recruited from the charter schools, then the authors found a demographically similar and geographically close public school from which to recruit teachers who were the same gender and had the same experience and certification level. For example, if a female elementary teacher at a predominantly low-income charter school undergoing certification with two years of teaching experience was recruited we tried to match that person as closely as possible with a teacher with similar characteristics at the local public school. There is an uneven number of pairs in our sample because some charter school teachers could either not be matched effectively, or there were multiple charter school teachers who had the same characteristics, therefore were matched with one public school teacher. The teachers were engaged multiple times, for approximately one to two hours per occasion, letting the respondents direct the conversations at the beginning, then gradually allowing the researchers to focus questions in alignment with a semi-structured interview protocol that focused on certification experiences and desires. When appropriate, the one-on-one interview format was abandoned for participant observation in classrooms or in their certification programs. In addition, information was collected about if/how interns used the information they learned from their certification programs in their classrooms. Generally, information was collected through two methods: field notes during and after fieldwork and audio recordings of the interviews.

Interviews were transcribed to allow for inter-coder review, which enabled us to discover themes within the data from repeated re-readings and analysis.

Results

Charter School and Public School Teachers Differ
There seems little doubt that charter school teachers, both networked and non-networked, and public school teachers differ quantitatively, as measured by survey data, and qualitatively in that they view each other as different populations. Here, we first present demographics from the *SASS* 2007-2008 that are nationally representative, then present our findings on how this group of teachers believes that they differ, and what effect this perceived difference may have.

Table 3 presents descriptive statistics on charter and public school teachers from the *SASS* 2007-2008 collected by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) approximately every three to four years. *SASS* amasses detailed information on teachers, principals, districts, and schools, including teachers' and principals' educational backgrounds, certification areas, race, income level, gender, age, years of experience, and many other variables. *SASS* has a sample size of approximately 14,500 schools and administrators, 75,000 teachers, and 5,700 school districts (Thurgood et al., 2003).

Table 3
Demographics on Charter and Public School Teachers, Schools and Staffing Survey

	Charter (SE) = 1237	Public (SE) = 37,003
Mean Age	38.49 (.332)***	42.91 (.061)***
Mean Years Experience	8.27 (.231)***	14.10 (.054)***
% female	71.54% (.013)**	68.83% (.002)**
% white	83.02% (.011)***	91.34% (.001)***
% black	13.18% (.010)***	5.82% (.001)***
% Asian	3.8% (.005)***	1.52% (.0006)***
Mean earnings ($)	41,491.52 (357.95)***	47,664.55 (75.85)***
% passed PRAXIS I Reading[1]	97.94% (.006)**	99.31% (.001)**
% passed PRAXIS I Math[1]	97.57% (.007)**	99.10% (.0008)**
% passed PRAXIS I Writing[1]	98.44% (.006)*	99.44% (.0006)*
% passed PRAXIS II Subject[1]	96.5% (.008)**	98.36% (.001)**
% from AltCert Program	23.04% (.012)***	12.77% (.002) ***
% with BA or MA in Education	70.74% (.013)***	85.25% (.002)***
% of college graduates with masters degree in any area	36.92% (.014)***	48.93% (.003)***
% uncertified[2]	14.15% (.010)***	1.3% (.0006)***
% certification in progress	17.06% (.011)***	9.93% (.002)***
% holding permanent certification in their state	68.80% (.013)***	88.78% (.002)***
% school is in rural area	16.49% (.011)***	35.17% (.002)***
% school is in suburban or town area	28.21% (.013)***	43.55%(.003)***
% school is in urban area	55.3% (.014)***	21.28 (.002)***
Mean Age upon entrance to teaching	29.68 (.243)***	28.10 (.039)***
Mean Years Charter School has	6.17 (.084)	N/A

been in existence

[1] Of those who have taken it.
[2] That is, those who do not hold regular, probationary, or temporary teaching certificates, or who are not currently enrolled in a certification program.

The data presented in Table 3 are descriptive, with two-sample *t*-tests used to differentiate between the charter school teachers ($N = 1237$) and the public school teachers ($N = 37,003$). Unfortunately, the data do not allow differentiation between networked and non-networked charter schools. Charter school and public school teachers were different on every variable measured ($p < .05$). Charter school teachers are 4.42 years younger, have 5.83 years less experience, and are more likely to be female and have diverse racial/ethnic backgrounds. Their pay averages about $6,000 less per year than public school teachers, although this may be an effect of their lesser average years of experience. The self-reported salary of the average first year teacher in a charter school in our sample is $41,491.52 and $47,664.55 in public school. The percentage of charter school teachers who have passed the PRAXIS certification exams is slightly lower than that of public school teachers, but this might be an effect of not necessarily having to pass them to maintain their jobs, especially in states that do not require certification, or have exemptions. As discussed above, a larger percentage of charter school teachers have entered through alternative certification than public school teachers (23 percent and 13 percent, respectively), and fewer charter school teachers have a BA or MA in education than public school teachers (71 percent and 85 percent, respectively).

Of those who have graduated from college, which is more than 99 percent of the *SASS* sample, more public school teachers have master's degrees in any area with nearly half of public school teachers and only 37 percent of charter school teachers, although this may again be a function of the public school teachers' greater age and years of experience. More public school teachers hold permanent certification in their state (89 percent and 69 percent, respectively), while the charter school teachers are concentrated in urban areas (55 percent of charter school teachers report that their school is in an urban environment, as compared to 21 percent of public school teachers). Charter school teachers are 1.58 years older (29.68 years old) upon first entrance into teaching on average than public school teachers. The average charter school in this sample had been in existence for a little over six years.

The Perceived Divide
From the *SASS* data, we can see that charter school and public school teachers are significantly different from one another on every measured variable: age, sex, race, urbanicity, education, and certification. However, perhaps of greater consequence than these numerical data, the charter school teachers, both networked and non-networked, considered themselves different from the public school teachers:

> *Are we different? Of course! I never could have taught in a*
> *regular public school – you just don't get the same level of support*
> *from your administration. Plus, you're hampered by all those*
> *union rules about how long you can teach and what other people*
> *can do. I mean, if the teacher next door is going to use some*
> *excuse not to put in the extra hours, then I don't want to work with*
> *her. And, of course, the extra money is nice. But, there's a real*

urgency here to getting results that I don't think you find in a
public school.

This teacher differentiates herself from her public school peers on five factors in this brief paragraph: administrative support, freedom from union rules (which she views as limiting her teaching time), collegial support and effort, money, and focus on student achievement as a goal. In this geographic area, charter school teachers reported being paid more than public school teachers. She considers her school superior to public schools in that she believes that her school demands results from students that public schools either cannot or will not have. In the charter schools that we studied, these results were almost always measured through test scores, which were considered generally unproblematic metrics of student growth by teachers and principals. However, many teachers focused on goals other than increased standardized test scores. A teacher from another school concurred with the notion that charter schools provide more support to teachers: "*If you're interested for teaching for social justice issues, you'd better go charter. You get the support to get results from all kids, which public school teachers don't.*"

The majority of charter school teachers, 21 of 25, reported feeling pity for the public school teachers, usually expressing sorrow for the public school teachers' perceived lack of resources or supportive school culture. In a few charter schools, there were teachers who had previously taught in public schools. Their opinions about the lack of support and zeal for student achievement in public schools were referenced by the other charter school teachers as proof that charters were better for students and, therefore, teachers. Of course, given that these teachers deliberately choose to enter charter schools, the self-selection bias is clear, but their ability to compare school situations was prized by their colleagues. We could find no teachers who had switched from charter to public school while collecting our sample.

Interestingly, about 10 teachers' answers to the question about the difference between charter and public school teachers changed over time and with greater trust in us. This validates our methodological choice to not just rely upon one-time interviews, but also to spend repeated time with teachers. Upon first meeting one of us, the charter school teachers would generally reference the perceived difference in support, collegiality, and shared focus on student achievement as the difference, as quoted above. Then, as trust grew and barriers perhaps lowered, some teachers began to give a different answer. As one male teacher with three years of experience said, "*You know what the difference is? We do more with less money because we work more and have better administration and teachers. Why can't they just get their shit together out there? These kids need so much.*" Rather than focusing on a lack of support, this answer places more blame on the public school teachers for not working hard enough. Certainly, this feeling was not universally reported. Only three or four teachers said anything resembling this. However, it may mean that charter school teachers might feel that their comparative success with their students, which all charter school teachers we spoke to reported that they had achieved, as measured by an increase in standardized test scores over the course of the school year, was due to a deficiency on the part of the public school teachers.

Given that study participants included teachers at different types of charter schools, both networked and non-networked, we expected that there might be some variation in responses as to whether they felt that they were different from public school teachers. It seemed likely that those

teachers at the non-networked charter schools, which were statistically less successful at raising student achievement than the networked charters in the same area, would feel differently about their public school peers. However, this was not the case:

> *Networked, non-networked - it doesn't matter. I know that the KIPPs and Uncommons of the world get more press attention, but we're just as good. We all think alike about these kids and all have more supportive administrations. I think that my school and my colleagues just have this energy and drive that is lacking in the district schools. I really think of myself as a charter school teacher, not just a teacher, and I think it makes all the difference in the world.*

This teacher references and equates his school with the networked charter schools that he sees as getting more attention, and speaks about the drive that he sees in his school that he does not see in public school teachers. The identity of "charter school teacher" is important to him, and he sees it as more important than the identity of "just a teacher," implicitly placing himself on a hierarchy above public school teachers and with the networked charter school teachers. This feeling was consistent: those at the non-networked charters reported the same feelings about the charter/public divide as their peers at the networked schools, which may point to the solidity and stickiness of the charter identity. That is, since they knew that their schools were generally reported in the news as "less successful" than their networked peers, there might be some advantage to identifying with those charter school peers, thereby strengthening the boundary between themselves and the public schools. However, while the responses from both types of charter school teachers about whether they were different from public school teachers were very similar, the networked charter school teachers did report they were in a superior situation to the non-networked charter school teachers, counter to how the non-networked teacher above reported. As one networked charter teacher put it:

> *[Non-networked charters] are just not as successful because they don't have the same culture as we do. And, support - they've got to just rely on their own schools, rather than the data from the whole system. I mean, I can call another kindergarten teacher from another [network name] school and get help. They might not have another teacher, so that's hard on them.*

This mention of "support" is very similar to what the charter school teachers thought was lacking in public schools, while the emphasis on the ability to reach out to others outside of the local school but in the same network for help was seen as a benefit. Some of these networked charter school teachers implicitly constructed a hierarchy of school support and student success: networked charters, non-networked charters, and then public schools at the bottom.

These themes of greater support and a heavier emphasis on student achievement were repeated by nearly every (24 of 25) charter school teacher in every school with whom we spoke, so we are confident in our dual assertion that charter school teachers differ on a quantitative level from public school teachers, and that the charter school teachers in this sample consider themselves different from public school teachers. From these quotations, it may even appear that a few charter school teachers consider both charter school teachers and schools superior to their public

school counterparts, an attitude we found consistently, but certainly not universally. However, the question arises as to whether the public school teachers see themselves as a separate group.

In short, yes. However, the responses given by the public school teachers were not as consistent as those given by the charter school teachers. Half of the public school teachers seemed to unquestioningly accept that charter schools get better results from students, saying that charter school teachers were "*just naïve. You get to cream off the students whose parents care, and then you tout that you're making all this progress? Uh, no. You're entering the game at third base and calling it a triple.*" So, their better results are due to their ability to select from a "higher" level of student than what the public school teachers reported had remained. The other half mentioned they thought that charters did not get better results from kids: "*I've heard about how they manipulate their stats and change things up. It's all about reporting it.*"

Even those public school teachers who entered the classroom at exactly the same time as charter school teachers and who were in the same university-based alternative certification program reported there was a divide between the two groups, with one teacher expressing that

> *they get a pass from the professors when they know that they're in charter schools. I mean, they kind of get ignored and not much work is expected out of them in class because the professors know that they're getting more specific training and support in their own schools, so there's not much point. They're spoiled. They're not really teaching - I'M teaching - or getting certified. They're getting acculturated to their own school and I don't even want to talk to them because it makes me angry.*

This teacher reported her peers in this certification program were being treated differently within the certification program because the education school professor was privileging their in-school training over what was being taught within the certification program. She did not see the charter school teachers as experiencing the same difficulty in the classroom as she does, and generally resents that expectations for them are different than those for her. She sees them as being school-specific teachers, while she can generalize her knowledge. Overall, this divide between charter school and public school teachers is real for her on every level, and causes negative feelings that are likely to hinder collegiality or the transmission of best practices or pedagogical growth. If she is resentful toward them and doesn't want to even talk to them, it is unlikely that they will share teaching tips. In fact, when asked, most participants responded that they would be extremely unlikely to talk to a teacher of the "other type" because they would have little to talk about, and probably be unable to help one another.

It is additionally interesting to note that, with the exception of three teachers in the sample who had switched from public to charter schools, the rest of the sample had no personal basis for comparing teaching in public and charter schools. Then, why were these attitudes so entrenched, especially in the charter school teachers? One public school teacher told us:

> *I read all about them in the newspaper. And, once in a while, I talk to a charter school teacher at a certification class or at a social event and I hate how they treat us all as this one big group. I*

mean, they're really nice people, but they just have blinders on about the world.

Here, even though this teacher complains that she feels like she has been conflated with other public school teachers, she implicitly does the same when speaking about charter school teachers. When asked why they thought there was such a divide, other teachers pointed to experience with the other type of teacher in certification programs, the actions of their certification instructors, or to the statements that school personnel or journalists had made about the other type of school, thereby reifying this divide.

Programmatic Needs
After ascertaining whether the teacher believed there was a divide between public and charter school teachers, we asked whether they thought that they should be segregated by school type into different alternative certification programs. Most (24 of the 25 charter school teachers and 11 of the 19 public school teachers) agreed that they should be, because it would allow for a greater focus on their perceived shared needs, by school type. A few (five of the public school teachers[3]) answered that they should be forced to enroll in the same types of programs, in an effort to meet other types of teachers and be exposed to other teachers' needs and problems because they might share those needs or problems in the future. However, those teachers who argued for this mixing of teacher types into one program still maintained that they would want different emphases and elements within a certification program than the other teacher type.

Public school teachers thought charter school teachers would want to focus only on how to teach high-achieving students, while charter school teachers thought public school teachers would want help on how to be "lifetime teachers" and focus on long-term skill acquisition. However, despite their quantitative demographic differences and perceived qualitative differences, neither of these assumptions was true for the vast majority of respondents.

What These Beginning Teachers Value in Certification Programs
Overall, the teachers in the study were or had been enrolled at a variety of different certification programs. There were three general categories that these programs fell into, in order of least to most demanding in terms of teacher workload: state-based program that was usually portfolio based, nighttime/weekend school of education-based program, and private program that had received state accreditation but was run by an NGO. For more information on the exact distribution of teachers by school type into program type, see Table 2.

There was surprising consistency in what different teachers in varied programs reported as useful from their certification programs, despite their varied school placements, educational backgrounds, and enrollment in different types of certification program. Generally, all of the charter school teachers and almost all (15 of 19) of the public school teachers reported wanting accountability from their programs, both in terms of personal accountability, such as keeping the teachers themselves on track to certify in a timely manner, and in terms of student accountability, such as reporting student learning or progress as part of the program. They expected to write papers, but generally reported that they found the research-based papers (e.g., "How to Best Teach Reading to ELLs") to be more helpful than reflective papers on pedagogical philosophy.

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[3] Numbers do not total to 44 because 4 teachers answered that they did not know.

Initially, we expected to leverage the methodological construct of matched pairs at charter and public schools to see if type of school made a difference in what teachers reported as useful. In a few cases, there were differences, but overall, despite the statistical macro-level differences between these teaching populations and the self-described divide that the teachers themselves reported, they were generally uniform in what they found helpful: programs that were designed to provide immediate, classroom-specific, and authentic responses to their teaching.

Given the perceived charter/public divide and the different school settings that these teachers reported that they had, we initially expected to find it reproduced in what teachers expected from their certification programs. Since these charter school teachers reported that their school support and training was superior to that of public school teachers, and these public school teachers reported that their population is different than charter school teachers', then it should follow that they should self-report different needs from certification programs.

Overall, it was found that teachers in the programs that demanded less work were also in programs that led to less teacher "buy-in" to gain certification. These teachers were generally dissatisfied with their state-sponsored portfolio-based program and its ability to add to their skills or knowledge. They floundered without clear guidelines as to what papers should look like, and found little to no connection between their certification work and their classrooms. These programs were generally considered detrimental to their teaching skills and students' achievement, as this matched pair demonstrates:

> *Yeah, I'm behind on all of it. I procrastinate on the papers and doing the self-assessments because I think they're worthless. Why should I expend my limited time to write stupid journal entries that don't add anything to my classroom? That actually takes away time that I could be doing real work...I'd actually like accountability, both for my own work and my students' achievement, as stupid as that sounds to be adding more work to my own plate. But, isn't that the point of me doing this? Not just jumping through meaningless hoops?*

> *Oh, I haven't done any of it. Seriously, I've missed every deadline because I don't care and it's worthless. No one's ever called or emailed to ask where my papers are, so I guess it's a joke to whatever state bureaucrat is running it, too. But, I'm officially enrolled, so it fulfills whatever bullshit requirement the legislature has put in place. First of all, I get better support at school and that's my real work. Second of all, you want to know my feelings about teaching? Umm, how does that help my kids? You should be asking about their scores, not some wishy-washy how do I feel question. This is why schools of education aren't taken seriously.*

These teachers reported much the same feeling about this portfolio-based program, even though they were employed at a public and charter school, respectively. Both of them preferred "real work," or work that could directly help their students, rather than the self-reflective writing assignments that this program was asking them to complete. Additionally, both noted they

wanted accountability, both personally for their work and for their students' progress. That desire for personal accountability might be in response to the large workload that each carries as a classroom teacher, and it became too easy for them to put off deadlines set by a faceless state worker in favor of more immediate student needs. However, they knew that this might backfire in the long-term, in that they would not finish their certification on time. They also each reported wanting to be asked directly about their students' progress because each teacher saw that as the true measure of her success and what any certification program should focus on. They had little patience for the "wishy-washy" reflective paper assignments.

The teachers participating in the program hosted by a local university's school of education also reported similar attitudes and desires. They appreciated the structured format of the university schedule, which forced them to complete assignments and papers by certain dates, and especially liked the immediate feedback from professors:

> *She* [the professor] *actually listens to what we want and gives us the Monday-morning tips. You know, stuff that's concrete that I can do tomorrow with them to help. I think she has a different perspective on teaching than I do, in that I value standardized tests somewhat and she thinks they're useless, but I sort of have to value standardized tests. I lose my job if I don't. Also, she comes into to watch me and gets back to me with tips right after that class, which I appreciate – if her write up comes weeks later, it doesn't much help me. I like the academic nature of it, too – I get much more out of research papers that help me learn more about teaching.*

This teacher cites his professor's responsiveness and willingness to visit his classroom for coaching as key in helping him become a better teacher. He reported he values the fact that she provides concrete skills, as well as assigning research papers. Since he has little to no experience with teaching or education classes, these papers serve the function of informing him about different pedagogical practices, as well as the history of teaching and education. Additionally, while he has a different perspective on standardized tests than she does (i.e., his job hinges on his students' performance on them), he has learned from her behavior that there are some stakeholders in education that do not value standardized tests as highly as his administration.

The above findings were also present among the teachers who were enrolled in the NGO program that required proof of student achievement to gain certification. Additionally, this program did one thing that the other programs did not: it used technology to help observe and supervise teachers in a cost-effective and, to the teachers, helpful manner. Specifically, instead of sending personnel out to teachers' classrooms, which is expensive and time consuming, the program gave them video cameras and encouraged them to send in clips of them teaching lessons on which they wanted feedback, or interactions with students with whom they needed some help. These clips were then viewed by the certification program's personnel, commented upon within 48 hours, and sometimes used, with teacher's permission, in the next in-person certification class meeting to demonstrate a pedagogical principle. All the teachers in this program were quite comfortable with sharing video clips with personnel:

> *Do I get a little nervous that someone will be watching a video of me? Sure! No one likes to see themselves on tape and hearing my*

own voice makes me cringe. But, there's no growth without risk
and I'm really glad not only of the coaching, but also the ability to
see all the things that are happening among the kids that I might
not see from the front of the room. Like, this kid is talking to that
one while my back is turned, or they all tune out at the same point
in the lesson - that's good to know. And, I trust my coach to be fair
and not cruel with her comments, too.

The teacher here expresses appreciation for the opportunity for self-examination of her own classroom and lessons, but also is willing to listen to the program's personnel because of interpersonal trust that they have developed over time. Additionally, since every teacher's successful completion of this program is dependent upon his or her students meeting a growth goal in student achievement, that the teacher him- or herself set at the beginning of the certification program, teacher accountability for student achievement is integral to the program. These teachers, while certainly self-selected into this program, reported the highest levels of satisfaction with their program, even though it had the highest work load and highest level of oversight from others. Indeed, those factors, the work load that challenged them to learn more about concrete pedagogical skills and the accountability for student achievement, were the reasons those teachers liked this program the most.

Conclusion

Overall, we found that there is a deep perceptual divide that has formed between the charter and public school teachers in our sample, but that divide is not germane to what these beginning teachers want from their certification programs. In terms of this divide, we found that public and charter school teachers differ both quantitatively in a national data and qualitatively in local perceptions of the other. Since each is a self-selected population, this was expected. In addition, counter to what we expected when beginning this research with teachers in such individualistic schools, teachers see this difference, charter versus public, as meaningful and valuable as shorthand in determining another teacher's training, pedagogical style, and outlook on education. Specifically, the identity of "charter" or "public" causes a real divide between the two groups that may have an impact on their ability to communicate with the other group.

The vehemence with which each group in our study viewed the other and the others' schools was unexpected, suggesting a deep divide that may hamper the transmission of best practices and personnel between each school type. Given the depth and emotionality of this divide, we were surprised to hear generally the same thoughts and opinions about certification programs from the two groups. Generally, we found two major themes while talking to all of our beginning teachers about certification: most wanted certification programs to demand more of them, particularly in the areas of accountability for student success; and the certification programs that did demand more were rated as more helpful and, paradoxically, less stress-inducing by most teachers than those programs that were designed to allow the teacher to gain certification easily. These more demanding programs were felt by the charter school teachers to be "more like my school's culture" and to "teach me more" by the public school teachers. Those programs that were designed to allow the teacher to gain certification more easily were seen as bureaucratic and forcing the teachers to "just jump through hoops."

This second finding was universally valid in both the networked and non-networked charter school teachers, and valid in most public school teachers in our sample. It may signal that teachers value synchronicity between the goals of their certification program and their school, in that the charter school teachers reported that teacher accountability was a goal in their schools. In addition, in our sample, there were three teachers who had completed both a traditional certification program and an alternative one, and those teachers all reported greater satisfaction with the alternative program because it "was more a match with what I need to do in school." While there is little doubt that teachers self-select into both school types and certification programs, the comparison of these two groups and the general consistency of our findings lends credence to the notion that these beginning teachers value accountability for student achievement and want to be challenged by their certification programs, as indicated by a greater demand for work that forced them to grow pedagogically, rather than what they saw as "busy work," most often described to us as teaching portfolios and reflection papers/journal entries. Additionally, even though the teachers described a large ideological and behavioral divide between public and charter school teachers, this divide was actually not evident in their ratings of certification programs, in which they were generally in agreement. They reported that they vastly preferred writing assignments that asked them to research some aspect of best practices in teaching, rather than writing a reflective paper, because of their lack of knowledge about teaching and desire to have concrete strategies to employ immediately in their classrooms. Finally, they reported they valued coaching that gave them specific advice tailored to their own classrooms in a timely manner, rather than coaches who they neither knew nor trusted and who never communicated with them.

As a society, we have created nearly 600 different alternate routes to certification for teachers. Some of them are designed to require very little extra work for teachers, assuming that beginning teachers are already overwhelmed. Ironically, these programs that are designed to be the most "teacher-friendly" appear to be least-valued by beginning teachers because of their lack of rigor and concrete help in teaching them how to be teachers. As respondent after respondent repeated: "I want more."

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