



Alternate Route To Teaching Attracts More Minorities

BY Kyla Calvert
December 26, 2011

SAN DIEGO — Last year more than 70 percent of California’s public school students were part of an ethnic or racial minority group. Meanwhile, more than 65 percent of the state’s teachers were white.

For the last five years, programs that let candidates earn their teaching credentials while working in the classroom have enrolled more Hispanic and African American candidates.

“We recruit everywhere,” said Catherine Kearney, president of the California Teacher Corps, an association of alternative credentialing programs. “We recruit within the ranks of non-teaching staff within schools and in the community. We recruit through active community groups including faith-based organizations.”

Kearney said that by recruiting within communities that need teachers these alternative programs bring teachers into the classroom who not only look like their students, but who live in the same communities and are committed to staying in and improving them.

About 25 percent of students in alternative credential programs during the 2010-11 school year were Hispanic and 9 percent were African American, compared to 17 percent and 4 percent in traditional credential programs.

Some research has shown that having teachers of the same race can contribute to boosting student performance on academic tests, which is part of why Kearney said recruit teachers of color should be a priority for California.

However, budget cuts and layoffs across the state have decreased the number of people enrolled in alternative credential programs. San Diego Unified is among districts that have put their recruiting for alternative credentials, according to the district's website.