

Education Week



Alternative-Certification Program for Calif. Teachers Provides Autism Training

Posted By Lisa Fine, Guest Blogger
February 24, 2010

California Teacher Corps announced plans today to partner with local school districts to provide autism training to approximately 25,000 veteran teachers who hold a special education credential.

The program will help districts meet new state regulations that require teachers who work with students with an autism spectrum disorder (ASD) to complete an autism-authorization certification. Districts in California must be in compliance by July 2011, the announcement said.

The California Teacher Corps is a nonprofit organization established in 2009 with the goal of placing 100,000 highly qualified teachers in California's communities by 2020. Teachers in these new alternative-certification programs will work on: understanding the characteristics of students with ASD, learning effective behavior strategies for students with ASD, and completing additional fieldwork, the group said in a news release.

The number of students diagnosed with autism spectrum disorders has increased over the years, with more than 53,000 such students now in California schools who need specialized services.

The new alternative certification programs will tailor instruction, professional development, and training on autism based on the individual needs of veteran teachers in each school district, the announcement said.

"Alternative certification programs are closely tied to the communities that we serve, allowing us to quickly provide high-quality training to veteran teachers in need of certification in this key area," California Teacher Corps President Catherine Kearney said in a news release. "As more and more children are diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder, our teachers must be prepared to meet their individualized needs, allowing these students full access to the best possible educational opportunities."