

Qualifications of and Supports to Florida Teachers Preparing Students to Earn Certifications

Elizabeth Glennie



ABOUT THE ISSUE BRIEF

This issue brief is part of a body of work on the implementation and outcomes of Florida’s Career and Professional Education (CAPE) Act. *“The role of industry-recognized credentials in high school completion and postsecondary enrollment in Florida”* (Florida Industry Certification Study) is examining the ways districts and schools in Florida support high school students in earning industry certifications and the benefits and challenges of these programs. The experiences of Florida’s districts and schools can inform policymakers and educators in Florida and nationally who are considering similar policies.

The Florida Industry Certification Study is being conducted by RTI International with funding from the U.S. Department of Education Institute of Education Sciences under Grant No. R305A170222. The views represented here are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the positions or policies of the U.S. Department of Education.

Visit www.flcertificationstudy.org to learn more about the study and to explore findings on topics such as school strategies for promoting industry certifications, teacher supports in this program, perceived costs of the program, and challenges to the program.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Elizabeth Glennie is a senior research education analyst at RTI International and is the principal investigator on the Florida Industry Certification Study. She designs and leads studies that examine the implementation and impact of U.S. educational policies on schools, teachers, and students. Many of her projects focus on factors influencing success in secondary school and access to postsecondary education for disadvantaged students. These studies have involved analyzing large national databases and data collected by states and specific intervention programs. She has developed surveys and interview protocol for students, teachers, and educational leaders.

Dr. Glennie has studied early college high schools, STEM schools, and other new models and strategies that have proliferated in North Carolina and across the country. Throughout her work, she communicates and collaborates with policymakers and service providers so that her studies can inform best practices.



Introduction

In Florida, the Career and Professional Education (CAPE) Act was enacted to promote pathways for students to earn industry certifications in high school. Once those pathways were in place, the number of students earning industry certifications increased dramatically—from 954 in academic year 2007-08 to 123,839 in academic year 2017-18. But little is known about how schools and districts implement

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this program or their perceptions of it. In 2018, as part of a study about students earning industry certifications in Florida, we conducted a survey of district staff and high school teachers across Florida to collect information on these topics. In this issue brief, we use the school survey data to examine the qualifications of those teaching courses linked to industry certifications and the supports schools give those teachers.

We sought one response per school and compared responses by different characteristics of schools. Although we find a general pattern of requirements and supports across schools, we also find some differences by school characteristic (locale, poverty level, and past certification rate).

What qualifications do schools require of teachers who teach courses linked to industry certifications?

Overall, 96 percent of schools that responded to our survey offered industry certifications, and leaders in these schools want to ensure that teachers have the qualifications needed to prepare students to take and pass industry certification exams. Of the schools offering certifications, 92 percent said that teachers were required to have certain qualifications to teach courses leading to certifications, and an additional 6 percent said that teachers were sometimes required to have certain qualifications to teach these courses. Those in the latter group noted that some career areas had different requirements than others.

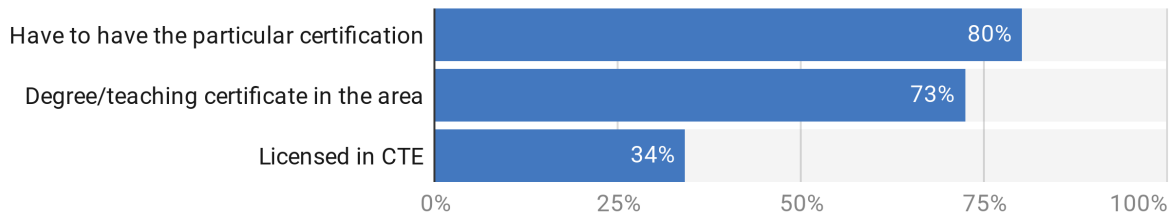
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Next, we asked what kind of qualifications were required. Respondents could select any number of the following options:

- a. Teachers have to have that particular certification
- b. Teachers have to hold a degree or teaching certificate in that area
- c. Teachers have to be licensed in career and technical education (CTE)

Most frequently, schools said that teachers were required to have the industry certification associated with the course they taught. About 80 percent of schools reported this requirement. The least frequent response was that the teachers be licensed in CTE, with only 34 percent of schools having this requirement. Because this requirement is less frequent, in many schools, teachers who are not CTE teachers may lead those courses.

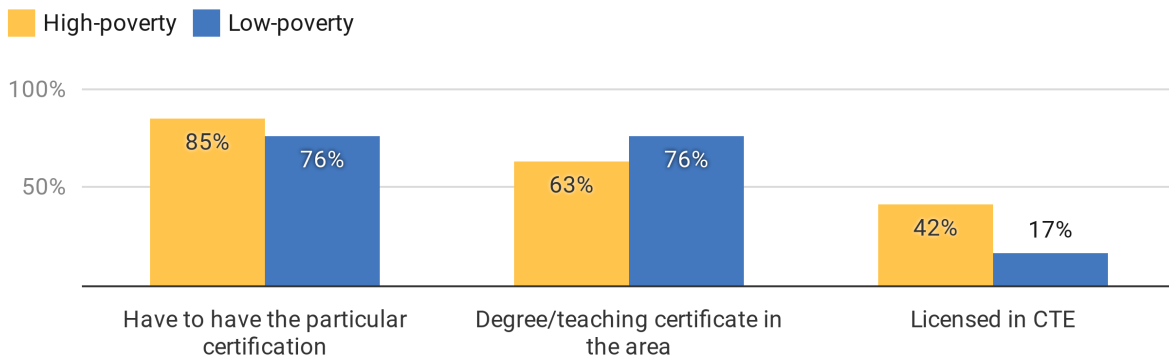
Qualifications for teachers of courses leading to certifications



Note: Because respondents could choose more than one type of qualification, percentages do not total 100%.

Across city, rural, and suburban schools, we did not find differences in requirements for teachers; however, high-poverty schools emphasized different requirements than low-poverty schools, and high certification rate schools had stronger teacher requirements than low certification rate schools.

Teacher qualifications, by school poverty level



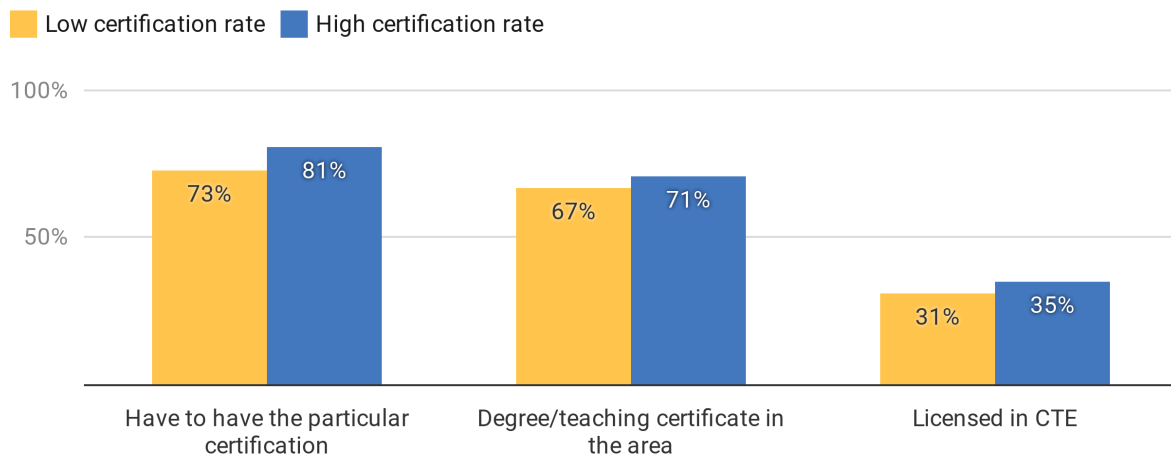
Note: Because respondents could choose more than one type of qualification, percentages do not total 100%.

A higher percentage of high-poverty schools require that teachers have the particular certification associated with the classes they teach and/or that they are licensed in CTE. In contrast, a higher percentage of low-poverty schools require that teachers hold a degree or teaching certificate in that particular area. The difference in the requirement to be licensed in CTE (42 versus 17 percent) may mean that high-poverty schools have less flexibility in administering the CAPE program.

For each of the teacher requirements, the schools with high past certification rates have stronger requirements than those with low past certification rates. One would think that having stronger teacher requirements would make it harder to have students earn certifications as schools may not have as many qualified teachers. However, given that these schools have relatively high certification rates, they must have staff who meet these qualifications. Having more teachers who have particular certifications, or teaching certificates in given areas, may make it easier for them to promote industry certifications to students.

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Teacher qualifications, by past school certification rate



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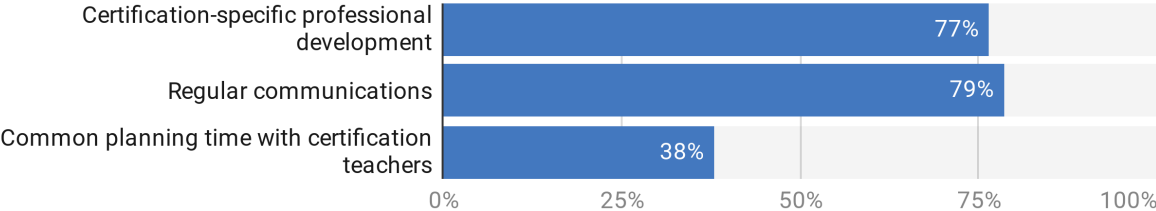
What forms of support do schools provide to teachers who teach courses leading to a certification?

Ninety-five percent of schools that offer certifications said they give extra support to teachers responsible for courses that lead to industry certifications. Our survey asked, “What forms of support, if any, does your school provide to teachers who teach courses leading to a certification? (Check all that apply).” Respondents selected from the following options.

- a. Certification-specific professional development or training
- b. Common planning time with other certification teachers
- c. Regular communications from departmental or school leadership

Providing certification-specific professional development and having regular communications from departmental or school leadership were the most frequently listed types of support. Three-quarters of the schools offered certification-specific professional development. About 78 percent of schools provided regular communication from leaders, and fewer schools offered common planning time with other certification teachers.

Support for teachers by schools

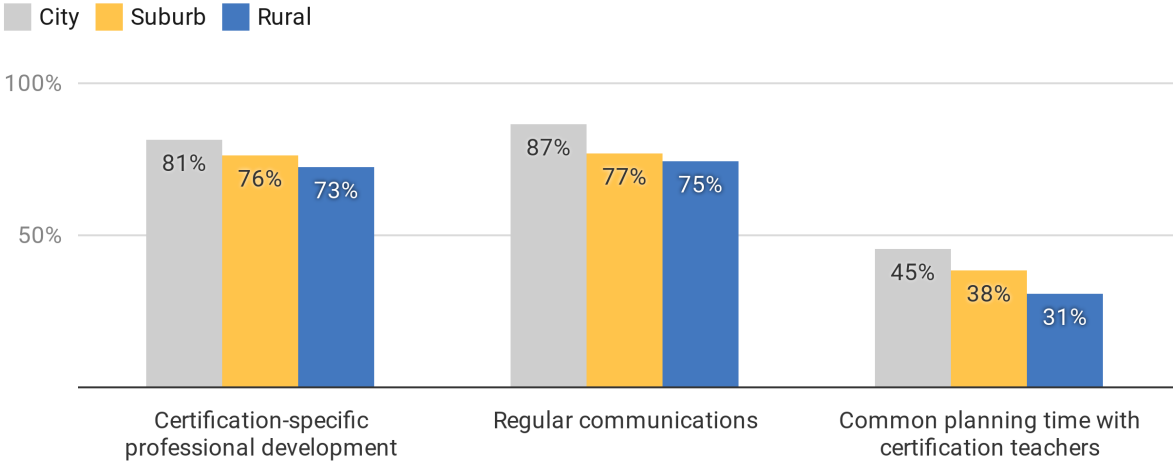


Note: Because respondents could choose more than one type of support, percentages do not total 100%.

The basic pattern of supports is the same across school types: certification-specific professional development and regular communications were more frequently identified than common planning time. Yet, we found some differences in the supports schools provided by the locale, poverty level, and past certification rate.

By locale, for each type of support, rural schools had lower levels of support than city schools in each type of support. The difference was about 10 percentage points for professional development and regular communications, and 14 percent for common planning time.

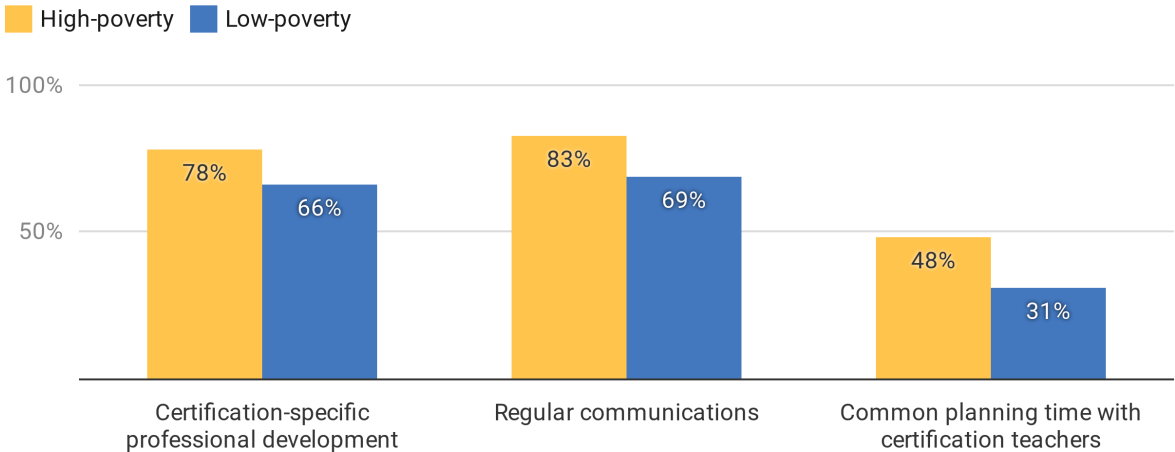
Support for teachers, by locale



Note: Because respondents could choose more than one type of support, percentages do not total 100%.

By school poverty level, high-poverty schools reported higher levels of each type of support than low-poverty schools. The biggest difference was in common planning time, which 48 percent of high-poverty schools provided, compared with 31 percent of low-poverty schools (a 17 percentage point difference). High-poverty schools often have fewer resources than low-poverty schools. As they provide more support to teachers, they seem to put a greater emphasis on promoting the CAPE program.

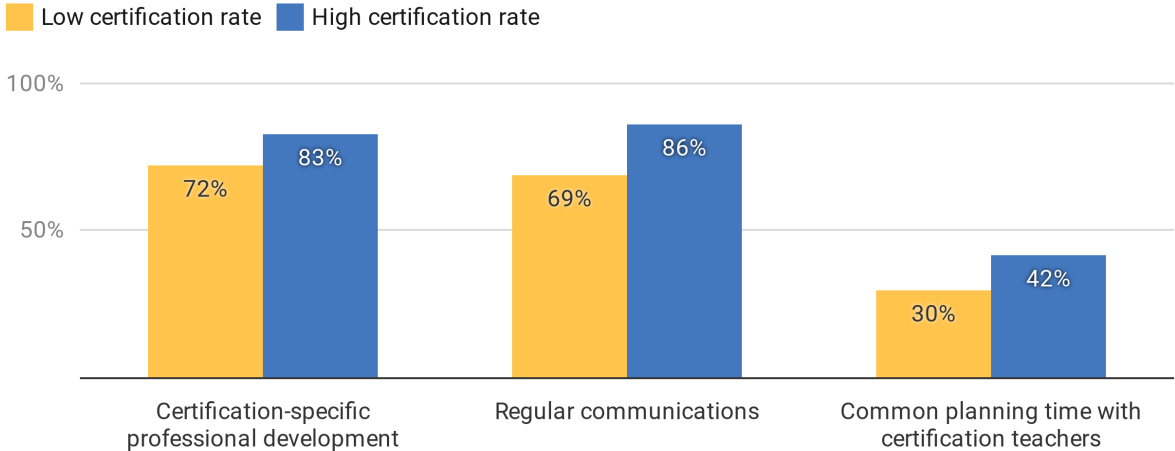
Support for teachers, by school poverty level



Note: Because respondents could choose more than one type of support, percentages do not total 100%.

Finally, in looking at support by past certification level, we find that high certification rate schools provided more of each type of support. For each type of support, the difference between high certification and low certification rate schools is more than 10 percentage points. Perhaps giving more supports to teachers helps these schools improve their certification rates.

Support for teachers, by past school certification rate



Note: Because respondents could choose more than one type of support, percentages do not total 100%.

CONCLUSION

As Florida’s industry certification program is administered within schools and students take certain courses to prepare for the certification examinations, having qualified and prepared teachers is essential for the program’s success. Schools have requirements for teachers of these courses, and almost all of them provide supports to the those teaching these classes.

Qualifications

Teachers were most frequently required to have the industry certification associated with the courses they taught. They were least frequently required to be licensed in CTE. Examinations are not standardized across certifications—different certification vendors will have different kinds of exams. Having the actual

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certification gives teachers direct information about the process and the kinds of questions associated with that particular exam. Because requirements for having a CTE license are less frequent, in many schools, teachers who are not CTE teachers may lead these courses, which may give the school more flexibility.

Supports

Most schools say they provide certification-specific professional development and have regular communications from departmental or school leadership. Fewer provide common planning time for teachers.

Comparisons

These basic patterns of requirements and supports are consistent across school locale, poverty level, and past certification rate. However, we did find some differences by school characteristics.

- City schools provided more support than rural schools did, but their teacher requirements did not differ.
- High-poverty schools provided more support than low-poverty schools did, and they tended to have more teacher requirements than low-poverty schools. Specifically, more high-poverty schools required that teachers have the particular certification they teach and/or that they are licensed in CTE.
- High certification rate schools had stronger teacher requirements and they provided more teacher supports than low certification rate schools.

END NOTES

Overall Notes

Results reported in this issue brief include school survey data collected through the [Florida Industry Certification Study](#) and are based on the schools that offer certifications.

Definitions

Poverty level: percentage of students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch.

- High-poverty - More than 75% (83 schools)
- Middle-poverty - 26-75% (383 schools)
- Low-poverty - Less than or equal to 25% (58 schools)

Locale:

- City (136 schools)
- Suburb (258 schools)
- Rural (130 schools)

Past certification rate: percentage of 9th graders in academic year 2013-14 who earned certifications by academic year 2016-17. This is the year before the survey when they should have been in 12th grade.

- Low certification rate - Less than 10% (151 schools)
- Middle certification rate - 10-25% (237 schools)
- High certification rate - More than 25% (136 schools)

Sources

[Florida Industry Certification Study](#)

[Florida Department of Education, Education Data Warehouse](#)