

Report of Teacher Assistant Assignments and Qualifications In RI School Districts and Other Educational Programs RI Department of Education - January 2007

This report provides data as follows:

<u>Topic</u>	<u>Page Number</u>
• National Research on State Practice Related to Teacher Assistants/Paraprofessionals	1
• RI Research on Teacher Assistant Assignments and Qualifications and Local TA Policy and Practice	2
• Report of 2006-07 Data on Teacher Assistant Assignments and Qualifications	3
○ Respondents	3
○ Summary Data on Teacher Assistant Assignments in 2006-07 As Compared with Prior Years	4
○ 2006-07 Teacher Assistant Assignment Data by Type of Assignment	6
○ Summary Data on Instructional Teacher Assistant Qualifications in 2006-07 As Compared with Prior Years	9
○ 2006-07 Instructional Teacher Assistant Qualifications Data	10

National Research on State Practice Related to Teacher Assistants/Paraprofessionals

Rhode Island is nationally recognized for its Teacher Assistant (TA) initiative. In 2005, the Education Commission of the States (ECS) published national research findings on an On-Line Interactive Paraprofessional Database that provides information on each state's response to No Child Left Behind (NCLB) requirements and paraprofessional/TA policies. The database is on the ECS Website at www.ecs.org/ (click on Education Issues, then NCLB, then Paraprofessionals). ECS research recognizes RI's TA initiative as a leader among states:

- 1 of 5 states that has the same qualifications for ALL instructional TAs
- 1 of 11 states with state level TA PD programs
- 1 of 12 states with TA requirements that exceed basic federal minimums

ECS names 11 states requiring instructional TAs to be certified by the state department of education. While the RI Department of Education (RIDE) does not technically certify TAs, the database notes that RIDE ensures that TAs are qualified using a process other than certification:

- Approving pre-employment TA training programs that TAs are required to take
- Requiring employers to ensure TAs meet qualifications
- Having in place monitoring and enforcement procedures for ensuring employers' personnel policies and procedures comply with TA qualifications requirements

RI Research on Teacher Assistant Assignments and Qualifications and Local TA Policy and Practice

In Fall 2003, 2004 and 2005, RIDE distributed a Survey of Teacher Assistant (TA) Practices in RI School Districts, Educational Collaboratives, State Operated Programs and Charter Schools. In these surveys, respondents provided information on TA assignments and qualifications and on their respective district/agency policy and practice supports for TAs and the instructional teams with which TAs work.

In 2006-07, RIDE is enhancing its TA data collection systems as follows.

- Data on TA assignments, qualifications and professional development
 - In 2006-07, RIDE is putting in place RICERT TA, a computer-based system to track the qualifications, assignments and professional development of TAs in School Districts, Educational Collaboratives, State Operated Programs, Charter Schools and Private Schools for Children with Disabilities. Beginning in 2007-08, this system will be used to report statewide data that has formerly been collected manually through a statewide survey.
 - As was done in 2003-04, 2004-05, and 2005-06, 2006-07 data on TA assignments and qualifications in School Districts, Educational Collaboratives, State Operated Programs and Charter Schools were collected through a statewide survey and are reported here. There was a 100% response rate in each of these 4 years. These surveys over the past 4 years were conducted by Peggy Hayden, Consultant, RI Technical Assistance Project (RITAP) at RI College, who coordinates RI's teacher assistant initiative.

- Data on district/agency policy and practice supports for TAs and the instructional teams with which TAs work
 - In 2003-04, 2004-05, and 2005-06, data on district/agency policy and practice supports for TAs and the instructional teams with which TAs work were collected through the same statewide survey in which data on TA assignments and qualifications in School Districts, Educational Collaboratives, State Operated Programs and Charter Schools were reported.
 - Beginning in 2006-07, TA policy and practice data will be collected over RIDE's computer-based eride system. Resulting data will be reported at a later date. These data will address the following TA policy and practice issues:
 1. Guidelines For TA Assignment
 2. Job Descriptions
 3. TA Orientation
 4. Training Teachers On Effective TA Use
 5. Instructional Team Supports
 6. TA Performance Evaluation
 7. Professional Development
 8. Career Ladder
 9. TA Recruitment
 10. TA Retention
 11. Substitute TA Use

This report is also available on RI's Teacher Assistant website at www.ritap.org/ta on the "About Us" webpage.

Report of 2006-07 Data on Teacher Assistant Assignments and Qualifications

The following reports data on TA/paraprofessional assignments and qualifications for 2006-07. In some instances, 2006-07 data are compared with prior year data. Data are presented on a statewide rather than individual district basis.

Respondents: Survey respondents were TA Contacts that RIDE has asked each district, educational collaborative, state operated program and charter school to identify. The TA Contact is RIDE's primary communication contact. In many instances, RIDE requests that the TA Contact copy and share information with TAs and related district personnel, e.g., quarterly TA Newsletter, workshop registrations, etc. The staff/position assigned as TA Contact varies.

Job Title	#
Director or Asst. Director of Pupil Personnel or Pupil or Student Services/Dir. of Special Education	12
Director or Asst. Director of Human Resources (HR); HR TA Specialist; HR Secretary	8
Superintendent/Asst. or Deputy Superintendent	5
Asst. Director of Administration and Finance; Director of Administration and Finance; Business Manager	4
Director/Asst. Director, Regional Special Education Program	3
Principal/Facilitator	3
Paraprofessional Union Representative	1
Curriculum Director	1
Educational Collaborative Representatives	4
State Operated Program Representatives	5
Charter School Representatives	11

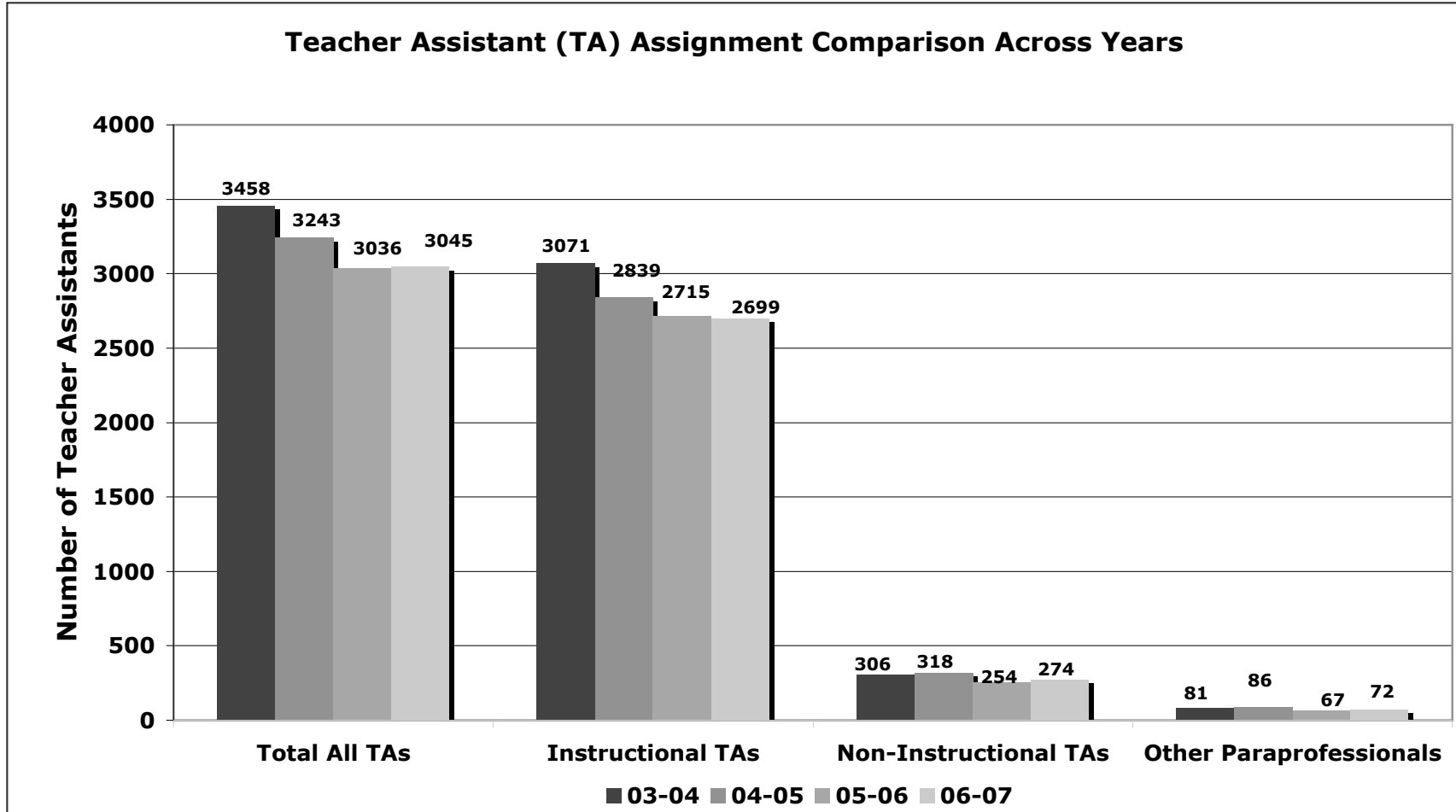
Respondents represented the following agencies.

- LEAs (Local Education Agencies)/School Districts: 36 out of 36 responded: Barrington, Bristol Warren, Burrillville, Central Falls, Chariho, Coventry, Cranston, Cumberland, East Greenwich, East Providence, Exeter-West Greenwich, Foster, Foster-Glocester, Glocester, Jamestown, Johnston, Lincoln, Little Compton, Middletown, Narragansett, New Shoreham, Newport, North Kingstown, North Providence, North Smithfield, Pawtucket, Portsmouth (includes data on Newport Regional Special Education Program), Providence, Scituate, Smithfield, South Kingstown, Tiverton, Warwick, West Warwick, Westerly, and Woonsocket
- Educational Collaboratives: 4 out of 4 responded: Northern RI Collaborative, Southern RI Collaborative, East Bay Collaborative, and West Bay Collaborative.
- State Operated Programs: 5 out of 5 responded: Metropolitan Regional Career and Technical Centers, William M. Davies Jr., Career and Technical High School, RI Department of Corrections, RI School for the Deaf, RI Training School
- Charter Schools: 11 out of 11 responded: Beacon Charter High School, Blackstone Academy, and New England Laborers/Cranston Public Schools reported no TAs. Eight (8) Charter Schools reported TAs. Their data are reflected recorded in this report: Compass, CVS Highlander,

International Charter School, Kingston Hill Academy, The Learning Community Paul Cuffee Charter School, Textron Chamber of Commerce Academy, and TIMES2Academy.

Summary Data on Teacher Assistant Assignments in 2006-07 As Compared with Prior Years - Data reported below is based on Full Time Equivalents (FTEs) in each of the following assignments. That is, these data do not reflect actual people, because some TAs work part-time.

TA Assignments in FTEs	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07
Instructional TAs	3,070.6 89% of all TAs/ paraprofessionals <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2148.5 or 70% serve children with disabilities. • Rest in general education, Title I or other roles. 	2,838.6 88% of all TAs/ paraprofessionals <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2124 or 75% serve children with disabilities. • Rest in general education, Title I or other roles. 	2,714.8 89% of all TAs/ paraprofessionals <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2062.5 or 76% serve children with disabilities • Rest in general education, Title 1 or other roles 	2,698.7 89% of all TAs/ paraprofessionals <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2078.9 or 77% serve children with disabilities • Rest in general education, Title 1 or other roles
Non-Instructional TAs	306 9% of all TAs/paraprofessionals	318 10% of all TAs/paraprofessionals	254.15 9% of all TAs/paraprofessionals Note: In prior years, Bus and Clerical Aides were included in this category. In 2005, they were not. This appears to be the major reason for the decline.	273.65 9% of all TAs/paraprofessionals
Other Paraprofessionals, e.g., therapy assistants	81 2% of all TAs/paraprofessionals	86.2 2% of all TAs/paraprofessionals	67.25 2% of all TAs/paraprofessionals	72.2 2% of all TAs/paraprofessionals
TOTAL	3,457.6 Total TA/Paraprofessional FTE positions	3,242.8 Total TA/Paraprofessional FTE positions	3,036.2 Total TA/Paraprofessional FTE positions	3,044.55 Total TA/Paraprofessional FTE positions



2006-07 Teacher Assistant Assignment Data by Type of Assignment

Key For Charts That Follow:

- LEA – Local Education Agencies/School Districts – 36 of 36 responded each year.
- Collab – Educational Collaboratives – 4 of 4 responded each year.
- SOP – State Operated Programs – 5 of 5 responded each year.
- Charter – Charter Schools - 11 of 11 responded each year (3 have no TAs)

Instructional Teacher Assistants in 2006-07

Definition:

Employed to provide instructional or other direct services related to the school's curriculum to students (and/or their parents/legal guardian) under the supervision and direction of the classroom teacher or other appropriately certified professional staff. This includes those who (1) provide one-on-one instructional reinforcement (referred to as "tutoring" in Title I programs) if such is scheduled at a time when a student would not otherwise receive instruction from a teacher, (2) assist with classroom management, such as by organizing instructional materials, (3) provide instructional assistance in a computer laboratory, (4) provide instructional support in a library or media center, (5) provide instructional assistance along with acting as a translator, or (6) provide instructional support services under the direct supervision of a highly qualified teacher. Because teacher assistants provide instructional support, they should not be providing planned direct instruction, or introducing to students new skills, concepts, or academic content.

Qualifications: Instructional TAs must

1. Be of good character,
2. Have a high school diploma OR general equivalency
3. Must have completed a RIDE approved TA Training Program IF hired AFTER Jan. 1, 1999. 3 Exceptions to this particular qualification: (A) TAs hired before Jan. 1, 1999 do not need to meet this qualification OR (B) Certification as a TA in another state, OR (C) Hold an associate's degree or bachelor's degree and have completed coursework or other training that covers the knowledge and skills needed for entry level instructional TAs as articulated in RIDE TA Standards. That is, the law does not specify the degree has to be in education or a related field...BUT training needs to have covered the Standards regarding TA knowledge and skills.
4. Must meet one of the following 3 requirements: For TAs hired AFTER Jan. 8, 2002, they must meet these requirements at the time of employment. For TAs hired PRIOR to Jan. 8, 2002, have until Jan. 8, 2006 to meet ONE of the following requirements.
 - a. Completed at least 2 years of study at an institution of higher education. OR
 - b. Obtained an associate's or higher degree. OR
 - c. Met a rigorous standard of quality and can demonstrate, through a formal State or local academic assessment: knowledge and ability to assist in instructing, reading, writing, and mathematics; OR reading, writing, and mathematics readiness. (The ParaPro is the state recognized assessment.)

2006-07 Data on Instructional Teacher Assistant Qualifications appear later in this report.

Data on Type of Assignment: Data reported below are based on Full Time Equivalents (FTEs) in each of the following assignments. That is, these data do not reflect actual people, because some TAs work part-time.

Instructional TAs	LEA	Collab	SOP	Charter	TOTAL
General Classroom TA	344	4	3	36.6	387.6
TA for Title I Students	208	0	2.5	0	210.5
Title I Targeted Assistance School TA	12	0	13.5	1	25.5
TA for students with mild or moderate disabilities	574	0	3	1	578
TA for students with severe or profound mental retardation or multiple disabilities	196	48	0	0	244
TA for students with disabilities served in inclusive settings	679	0	2	3	684
One:One TA for students with disabilities (NOT including Personal Care Attendants)	356	12	2	2	372
TA for students with behaviors that interfere with learning and/or relationships	147	32.8	.5	0	180.3
TA assisting with community-based instruction	11.3	0	0	0	11.3
TA who works placement program for children with disabilities at senior high level when half of class is on work placement	8.5	.8	0	0	9.3
TA assisting in Instruction in Career and Technical Schools	18.5	1	2	0	21.5
TOTAL	2528	98.6	28.5	43.6	2698.7

Note: Several districts report many TAs in self-contained settings go into general education classrooms with their students part of the day.

Non-Instructional Teacher Assistants in 2006-07

Definition:

Employed primarily as translators, solely involved in parental involvement activities or in non-instructional roles, e.g., cafeteria or playground supervision, personal care services, non-instructional computer assistance or other non-instructional direct services to students (and/or their parents/legal guardian) under the supervision and direction of the classroom teacher or other appropriately certified professional staff

Qualifications: Non-Instructional TAs must:

1. Be of good character,
2. Have a high school diploma OR general equivalency
3. Must have completed a RIDE approved TA Training Program IF hired AFTER Jan. 1, 1999. 3 Exceptions to this particular qualification: (A) TAs hired before Jan. 1, 1999 do not need to meet this qualification OR (B) Certification as a TA in another state, OR (C) Hold an associate's degree or bachelor's degree and have completed coursework or other training that covers the knowledge and skills needed for entry level instructional TAs as articulated in RIDE TA Standards. That is, the law does not specify the degree has to be in education or a related field...BUT training needs to have covered the Standards regarding TA knowledge and skills.
4. Individuals serving as translators to enhance the participation of limited English proficient students must also be proficient in English and a language other than English.

Data on Type of Assignment: Data reported below are based on Full Time Equivalents (FTEs) in each of the following assignments. That is, these data do not reflect actual people, because some TAs work part-time.

Non-Instructional TAs (please specify type)	LEA	Collab	SOP	Charter	TOTAL
Primarily as translators (not providing instruction)	8.25	0	0	0	8.25
Solely involved in parental involvement activities	5	0	0	0	5
Building/general teacher assistants, e.g., provide students with non-instructional direct services or supervision in settings such as the playground, cafeteria, hallway, etc.	175	0	5	.5	180.5
Personal Care Attendants	48	0	3	0	51
Non-instructional media assistance, e.g., in computer labs or libraries	28.5	0	.4	0	28.9
TOTAL	264.75	0	8.4	.5	273.65

Non-Instructional TAs do NOT include:

- Bus monitors, because they do not work under the supervision and direction of the classroom teacher or other appropriately certified professional staff
- Persons whose role is solely clerical and does not include direct non-instructional services to students.

Other Paraprofessionals in 2006-07

Definition:

Paraprofessionals other than instructional and non-instructional TAs.

Qualifications:

RIDE recognizes qualifications established by other state agencies for paraprofessionals other than TAs. The TA website at <http://www.ritap.org/ta> has a link to the RI Department of Health (DOH) website to access qualifications and related requirements for: Nursing assistant, Occupational therapy (OT) assistant, OT aide, Physical therapy (PT) assistant, and Speech language support personnel. It also has a link to the Dept. of Human Services (DHS) website at <http://www.dhs.state.ri.us/> to the Medicaid Direct Services Guidebook for Local Education Agencies that addresses: (1) PT including services provided by a PT assistant under the supervision of a licensed PT, (2) OT including services provided by a certified OT assistant (COTA) under the supervision of a licensed OT, and (3) Speech and Language Pathology including Individual Speech Hearing and Language Program and Speech Hearing and Language Program/Group (small group) therapy that may be provided by an appropriately credentialed paraprofessional working under the supervision of a Speech-Language Pathologist certified by RIDE or a Speech-Language Pathologist licensed by the DOH.

Data on Type of Assignment: Data reported below are based on Full Time Equivalents (FTEs) in each of the following assignments. That is, these data do not reflect actual people, because some paraprofessionals work part-time.

Other Paraprofessionals (please specify type)	LEA	Collab	SOP	Charter	TOTAL
Nursing assistant	37	0	0	0	37
Occupational therapy assistant	18	1	1	.5	20.5
Occupational therapy aide	4	0	0	0	4
Physical therapy assistant	7.2	0	0	0	7.2
Speech language support personnel	2.5	1	0	0	3.5
TOTAL	68.7	2	1	.5	72.2

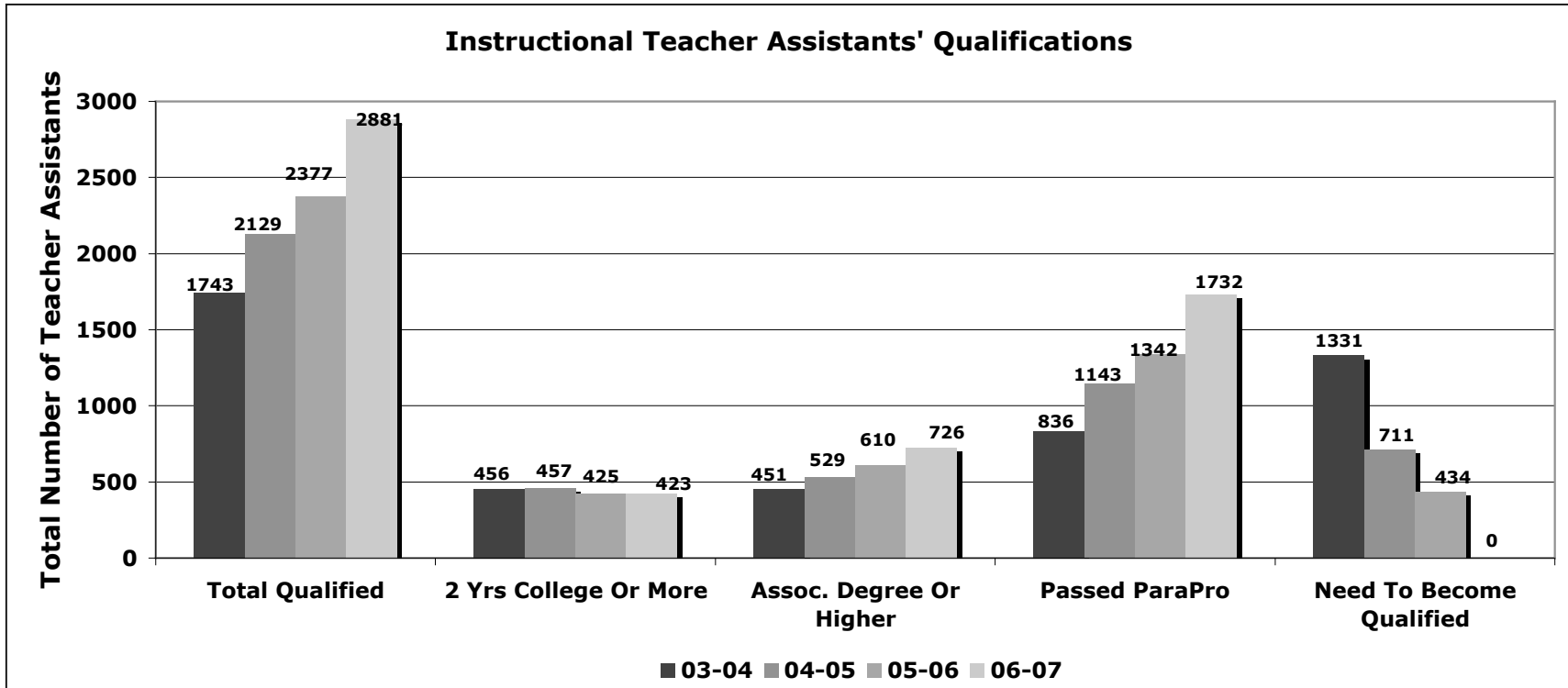
Summary Data on Instructional Teacher Assistant Qualifications in 2006-07 As Compared with Prior Years

- These data represent actual people and not Full Time Equivalents (FTEs) as was reported earlier in this document related to TA assignments. As a result, the FTE for TA assignments is less than the actual number of people reported below as being qualified for these instructional TA positions, e.g., 1 FTE might be staffed by 2 part-time people.
- Data on qualifications of non-instructional TAs and other paraprofessionals were not requested as part of this survey.

TA Qualifications*	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07
2 years (48 credit hours) or more college**	456	457	425**	423
Associates degree or higher (including bachelor & master degrees)**	451	529	610**	726
Have passed the ParaPro Assessment	836	1,143	1,342	1,732
TOTAL QUALIFIED	1,743 57% Qualified	2,129 75% Qualified	2,377 85% Qualified**	2,881 100% Qualified
Still need to meet qualifications by 2006 as required by state and federal law.	1,331	711	434	0

* This is a partial listing of instructional TA qualifications. A complete listing of the qualifications appears earlier in this report.

**Two districts require all of their instructional TAs to have 2 years+ of college or an associates degree or higher. In 2003-04 and 2004-05, these two districts reported all of their TAs as a combined grouping under 2 years+ of college. Beginning in 2005-06, one of these districts broke the data out into these 2 sets of qualifications and, in fact, most of their TAs hold associates degree or higher.



2006-07 Instructional Teacher Assistant Qualifications Data

	LEA	Collab	SOP	Charter	TOTAL
2 years (48 credit hours) of college*	388	1	17	17	423
Associates degree or higher*	664	34	11	17	726
Passed ParaPro	1642	73	7	10	1732
<i>*If TAs meet qualifications via college courses or degrees, do you require these be in:</i>					
Education	10	1	1	1	13
A field related to TA's assignment	5	2	1	1	9
Any area	25	1	3	3	32