

■ **Module 1: Introduction to Grow
Your Own Programs**

NARRATOR: ELLEN CUSHING

Grow Your Own: A Systemic Approach to Securing an Effective Educator Talent Pool

An Introduction to Grow Your Own Programs

This module develops a common understanding of Grow Your Own (GYO) programs, explores the emerging though limited research on GYO programs, and reviews emerging GYO programs under way.

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LEARNING MODULE

The learning series, ***Grow Your Own: A Systemic Approach to Securing an Effective Educator Talent Pool***, was developed through a collaboration among six federally funded technical assistance centers, including two content centers: the College and Career Readiness and Success Center, the Center on Great Teachers and Leaders and four regional comprehensive centers including the Great Lakes Comprehensive Center, the Midwest Comprehensive Center, the Southeast Comprehensive Center, and the Texas Comprehensive Center. The learning series is divided into four short modules focused on critical Grow Your Own (GYO) topics.

SLIDE 1: Hello, and welcome to the learning series *Grow Your Own: A Systemic Approach to Securing an Effective Educator Talent Pool*. This learning series was developed through a collaboration among six federally funded technical assistance centers, including two content centers: the College and Career Readiness and Success Center, the Center on Great Teachers and Leaders, and four regional comprehensive centers including the Great Lakes Comprehensive Center, the Midwest Comprehensive Center, the Southeast Comprehensive Center, and the Texas Comprehensive Center. This module is the first in the series and provides an introduction to Grow Your Own Programs.

SLIDE 2: We will begin this module by first providing an overview of the Grow Your Own (or GYO) learning series.

SLIDE 3: The learning series is intended to support listeners in developing and implementing GYO programs to develop a robust and effective educator talent pool. The audience for this module includes any stakeholders interested in developing a GYO program, such as SEAs, LEAs, educator preparation programs, and community organizations. The series is divided into a set of short modules that focus on specific topics that are critical to developing a GYO program.

SLIDE 4: Topics for the series include this first one, which provides an introduction to GYO programs.

SLIDE 5: For this first module, we will begin by developing a common understanding of what we mean by *GYO programs*, including how they are defined, common structures of GYO programs, common state and local goals for GYO programs, and key stakeholders that are often involved in designing and implementing GYO programs. Next, we will discuss the emerging—though limited—research on GYO programs. Finally, we will close with a review of some emerging GYO programs under way across the country that can be used as references and models for other stakeholders interested in implementing a GYO program.

SLIDE 6: So, let's begin by first defining what we mean by a GYO program.

SLIDE 7: As seen on this slide, GYO is a localized approach to developing a pipeline of educator candidates to meet local workforce needs. Broadly, GYO programs enable states and local communities to plan and to recruit for specific workforce needs.

Because GYO programs are localized, communities can focus on specific workforce needs such as school-level shortages, including high school educators and subject-level shortages like CTE educators, special education teachers, or STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) teachers.

GYO programs can also be leveraged to ensure that the teaching workforce reflects community demographics, such as teachers who reflect the students they teach, or educators from rural communities teaching in rural schools.

SLIDE 8: Although we are using a common definition of a GYO program, there are many ways that a GYO program can be structured and implemented based on the specific context and needs of the community. Here, we outline three common structures that we are seeing state and local education agencies implementing, though it should be noted that these structures do not have to be implemented in isolation. In fact, it is common for stakeholders to implement a combination of these structures to most effectively leverage a GYO program to meet their educator pipeline needs.

The first structure is called ***Precollegiate***, where high school students participate in cocurricular programs and career exploration courses, such as career and technical education programs of study, electives, or other course codes. The goal of this strategy is to recruit students early in their careers into the educator pipeline by exposing them to the teaching profession, particularly by offering students an array of clinical, work-based learning opportunities to try out teaching themselves.

In some precollegiate programs, this also includes earning credit at postsecondary institutions so students can enter into a postsecondary program already having completed some courses for their educator preparation program. This strategy can be leveraged to engage early with students who might otherwise not seriously consider pursuing teaching to test-drive the profession. Precollegiate programs can also support strategies to specifically encourage students from diverse backgrounds to enter the profession and, alternatively, to expose students to teaching who might learn that the teaching profession is not for them.

The second structure is titled ***Community Focused***, which focuses on providing supports for transitioning current school staff to teaching positions. This could include paraprofessionals, instructional aides or long-term substitutes who have already demonstrated a commitment to school-based employment in the community and supporting them to become full-time educators.

The third structure, ***University Initiated***, focuses on a partnership between preparation providers and districts that integrates co-designed clinical experiences and coursework throughout the preparation program. By focusing on co-designing experiences and coursework, this collaboration between preparation programs and the districts who aim to employ and retain the programs' teacher candidates is designed to ensure that students completing postsecondary programs are prepared to teach in the specific communities that need them the most. The structure requires collaboration and honest conversations about the biggest needs for districts and how the preparation program can support those students.

SLIDE 9: GYO programs can be leveraged to achieve a series of localized goals. Across the country, we are seeing states and local communities support GYO programs in an effort to ensure equitable access to effective educators for all students. By creating more effective instruction (instruction that is made by locally grown teachers who are more culturally competent with the local student population), and by creating more effective instruction that is

made by improving retention and thus the rate of experienced teachers. But this is true only if GYO programs are aimed at the schools that didn't have them before (on which we will expand in Module 2).

GYO programs are also being used as a strategy to diversify the teaching workforce, such as through early student recruitment in precollegiate programs.

Precollegiate programs also support student career exploration by providing an opportunity for students to develop an understanding of what teaching entails, thereby helping them to make an informed decision about whether the teaching profession is for them or not.

Further, exposing students to postsecondary coursework and, in some cases, offering students opportunities to teach while still in high school, increases students' college & career readiness by providing opportunities to apply academic content and technical skill in the real-world.

Finally, as described in the GYO definition, GYO programs are designed to meet local workforce needs by understanding what the specific local educator talent needs are and recruiting for those needs. For example, programs implementing the community-focused structure might choose to support the development of current school staff that meet the specific subject-level or grade level demands for the workforce.

Similarly, a university-focused approach would work closely with local communities to understand where their gaps in workforce exist and support the development of teacher candidates in grade and subject-levels where there is the greatest need, both in the immediate and long-term.

SLIDE 10: As we talk through the definition and different structures that GYO programs can take, there is a set of stakeholders that need to be included in the design, implementation, and continuous improvement of GYO efforts. State leaders can play a critical role in prioritizing GYO as a strategy, offering incentives or funding supports for GYO programs and by providing parameters or guidance support to local communities implementing GYO.

District leaders also play a similar role in making GYO a priority and providing guidance and support for designing and implementing the program. Furthermore, district leaders can act as the liaison between postsecondary institutions, particularly for precollegiate and university-focused programs, and provide the high-level view of workforce needs for the community.

School leaders, teachers, school counselors, and educator preparation institutions all play a critical role in implementing the program. These stakeholders design the curriculum, recruit candidates into the GYO program, and provide critical insights into the specific workforce needs for future educators. Teacher unions or other association affiliates whose missions dovetail with expanding the teaching talent pool can be valuable partners in connecting programs to resources and opportunities for recognition.

Finally, engaging the parents or families of prospective students can help build community buy-in for a GYO program. These stakeholders can be critical allies in ensuring the success of the program and will be critical for long-term sustainability.

SLIDE 11: Although GYO programs are relatively new and there is limited research on their effectiveness to solve long-term educator talent issues, there are many reasons that states and local communities are interested in exploring GYO programs. This next section will provide an overview of some of the research that undergirds GYO as an educator pipeline workforce solution.

SLIDE 12: Location is a significant factor of where teacher candidates decide to work. Nationwide, 60% of teachers work in schools within 20 miles of the location in which they attended high school. Teachers are more likely than other professionals to live close to where they grew up. Since homegrown teachers compose such a significant share of local workforces, districts can look to GYO programs as an opportunity to proactively broaden and cultivate a better-prepared and representative talent pool to meet local needs.

Compared to their urban and suburban counterparts, rural school districts struggle to recruit and retain highly prepared teachers. Factors such as low salaries, low student enrollment, challenging working conditions, social isolation, and geographic isolation of rural districts challenge superintendents to attract and retain teachers. Despite the perceived disadvantages of working in rural school districts, empirical research and anecdotal evidence indicate that teachers originally from rural communities are more likely to teach in rural school districts.

Because most teachers prefer to work in close proximity to the location in which they attended high school, and they teach students who share their personal demographic characteristics, GYO programs are promising solutions for attracting and retaining teacher candidates in hard-to-staff rural districts. GYO teacher participants are accustomed to the lifestyles in which they grew up, and they have strong connections with the community.

Also, as districts emphasize the importance of culturally responsive teaching—of being able to connect meaningfully with students in a community—members of that community are well positioned to excel in that regard. Therefore, emphasizing that teacher candidates will have the opportunity to serve students from the same community can be a successful recruitment strategy.

SLIDE 13: Research shows that the diversity of the teaching workforce is important. When students have teachers who reflect their demographic makeup, there is a positive effect on student achievement, increased enrollment in advanced-level courses, an increase in college attendance and retention rates, and overall improvement in school attendance.

Despite the research, teachers of color are underrepresented in the teaching workforce and generally have higher rates of attrition than White teachers. The leaky educator pipeline loses promising candidates at various stages of a prospective teacher’s journey: high school

graduation, college enrollment, college graduation, licensure/certification, induction, and mentoring. Prospective teachers, particularly non-White candidates, steer away from a path that leads to a teaching career as early as high school.

While there are mixed results across research reports, some research does indicate that GYO programs may have some degree of success in recruiting and retaining teachers from specific populations. Teachers of color are more likely to want to work in schools with a large minority population. GYO initiatives that explicitly recruit and support new teachers of color have been associated with high retention rates in hard-to-staff positions.

SLIDE 14: Finally, leveraging career and technical education (or CTE) programs for precollegiate GYO programs can build on the existing research on the positive impacts that CTE programs have on students.

In reviewing the research, we see that CTE serves 94% of all high school students. Students who were CTE concentrators—those taking at least two courses in a CTE program of study—had an average high school graduation rate of 93%, compared to the national adjusted cohort graduation rate of 80%.

Furthermore, research indicates that CTE reduces dropout and increases on-time graduation, particularly CTE courses taken in the 11th and 12th grades. And the more students participate in career and technical student organizations, the higher their academic motivation, academic engagement, grades, career self-efficacy, college aspirations, and employability skills. Research also shows that students who take advanced CTE courses in high school see higher earnings, including a 3.2% wage increase for CTE concentrators.

Finally, 91% of high school graduates who earned two to three CTE credits enrolled in college.

Leveraging CTE is one promising way to implement and support a robust GYO that has been successful in many states.

SLIDE 15: We will close this first module with a highlight of emerging GYO programs currently being implemented across the country, including a quick overview of the program and the major goals of the initiative. These programs can be starting points for other stakeholders interested in developing their own GYO program.

SLIDE 16: For a precollegiate program with rigorous content and effective stakeholder allies, Recruiting Washington Teachers (RWT) is a compelling model. RWT is a high school teacher academy program, rooted in content developed by Washington state's Professional Educator Standards Board, funded by the state legislature and administered by the Educator Pathways and Workforce Development office. RWT's content is rooted in equity pedagogy, helping students to explore cultural identity and educational opportunities through the lens of the teaching profession. The RWT program, which launched in 2007, has a well-resourced website where its curriculum, evaluation results, and many supplemental materials are freely available.

For a state education agency investing in launching and scaling GYO efforts, in the past year the Texas Education Agency has launched two cycles of a Grow Your Own competitive grant that offers three pathway options for GYO efforts. Pathway 1 provides resources to districts and stipends to teachers to launch and continue Education and Training high school courses, many of which offer dual enrollment opportunities, as part of a CTE program of study. Pathway 2 is focused on supporting staff already dedicated to teaching by providing tuition assistance to paraprofessionals, instructional aides, and long-term substitutes who are pursuing full-time, certified teacher roles. Pathway 3 recruits promising new teachers by incentivizing completion of student teaching placements in rural LEAs through stipends to teaching candidates.

For a curriculum and training provider that helps launch and sustain teacher academy programs across the country, the South Carolina Center for Educator Recruitment, Retention, and Advancement offers the Teacher Cadets program. As an off-the-shelf option for curriculum where teachers attend initial and ongoing trainings, Teacher Cadets reaches approximately 170 high schools with nearly 200 classes serving an average of 2,700 juniors and seniors annually. More than 60,000 students have participated in the Teacher Cadet program in its 30-year history.

Educators Rising is a free, national membership organization for aspiring teachers and their mentors who are participating in a variety of GYO programs. Educators Rising offers supplemental resources to GYO programs, an online platform for members, and national- and state-level programming including events, competitions, and student leadership opportunities. Structured as a career and technical organization, Educators Rising is a permanent member of the National Coordinating Council on Career and Technical Student Organizations. Participants from more than 2,400 schools who have joined Educators Rising and more than 43,000 students have signed up as rising educators, with 51% of the student network composed of students of color. Furthermore, since 2015 [27 states and regions](#) have become official Educators Rising affiliates.

The North Carolina Teaching Fellows program offers a competitive, merit-based forgivable loan that provides up to \$4,125 a semester (\$8,250 a year) for up to 4 years to highly qualified students committed to teaching special education or a STEM field in a North Carolina public school. The program was recently resurrected with five educator preparation provider partners across the state, with its first cohort participating in the current 2018–19 school year.

Grow Your Own Illinois is a nonprofit that offers scholarships of \$1,000 to \$3,000 per semester along with extensive support to prospective teachers seeking either a bachelor's or a master's degree. The priorities of GYO Illinois include creating a pipeline of highly qualified teachers of color, supporting GYO teachers once they are in the classroom, and advocating to close the teacher–student diversity gap across Illinois. GYO Illinois has produced 123 currently employed teachers serving approximately 2,000 students since it was initially funded with the passage of the Grow Your Own Teacher Education Act in 2005.