

■ **Module 4: Essential Components
of a Grow Your Own Program**

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

Essential Components of a Grow Your Own Program

Module 4 identifies the essential components of three Grow Your Own (GYO) program structures and explores guiding questions to help listeners realize these essential components in their local context.

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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 fourth and final module in the series and provides an exploration of the essential components of Grow Your Own programs.

SLIDE 2: For this fourth and final module in the learning series, we will revisit a slide from the first overview module that shows three structures of Grow Your Own programs. For each of those structures, we will identify the essential components of a GYO program. Once we have explored all three structures, we will close with some guiding questions and a call to action to help you begin to plan for realizing these essential components in your context.

SLIDE 3: In this module, we will dissect and gain a better understanding of the essential components of the three structures of Grow Your Own that we've examined earlier in the GYO learning series.

The language we'll be using also aligns with the Texas Grow Your Own grant, administered by the Texas Education Agency, which was inspired by a statewide Rural School Task Force and was designed to support educator recruitment across the state with a special emphasis on rural districts. At AIR, we found this framing helpful for looking at how Grow Your Own programs can be set up.

First, we have ***Precollegiate***, where high school students receive targeted, scaffolded opportunities to test-drive teaching and then promising candidates are able to access a clear on-ramp to a comprehensive educator prep program in postsecondary.

In the middle of this slide we have ***Community Focused***, which means targeting adults already in the community and demonstrating the nascent skills of an effective local educator. This structure mainly targets adults already working in the school system but not yet fully licensed to be teachers of record—specifically, paraprofessionals, aides, and substitutes. This model, which takes an alternative certification format rather than a full-fledged undergraduate major or graduate degree program, can also be broadened to recruit other adults in the community who could effectively fill key workforce needs.

On the right, we have ***University Initiated***, in which a postsecondary institution, which already holds the primary responsibility of traditionally preparing a majority of the teacher workforce, takes proactive steps to match and support student teachers in districts, and is designed to ensure that students completing postsecondary programs are prepared to teach in the specific communities that need them the most.

SLIDE 4: Let's unpack the essential elements of Grow Your Own programs. Each of the three structures from the previous slide has specific needs for Content, Delivery Model, and Personnel in order to conceptualize and implement an effective Grow Your Own program.

Let's take content for a precollegiate program first. We put content first because it's essential, of course. What those high school students will actually be learning and doing is very important: They'll be exploring teaching and then making the decision about whether to pursue it as a career. However, this

content piece can often be overlooked. You'll find exposure programs for high school students that stick the teacher in charge with the task of making up the curriculum and assessments on their own from whole cloth, often by poking around Google or Pinterest, staying just a day or two ahead of the students, and often falling back onto implicit biases of their own comfortable, familiar habits and their own preparation experience.

In order for high school students to want to become teachers and to take the first steps in becoming really skilled at it, they need to authentically envision themselves as change agents who aren't just looking to maintain the old system but can bring their creativity, talents, and vision into classrooms that they'll be leading in the mid-2020s and beyond. If the program is going to be a rigorous, relevant, coherent on-ramp to postsecondary, without being redundant or a superficial miniaturization of a teacher prep program, teachers are going to need content support.

So here are a few places to look. Educators Rising—which, in full disclosure, I served as co-director of until November 2017—has developed standards for what teenage, aspiring educators need to know and be able to do. I recommend following the link on the references slide or googling “Educators Rising standards” to get the full report, because this lays out a very strong, developmentally appropriate vision for how precollegiate students can take their first steps on a path to great teaching. T

he standards were developed by a committee of practitioners, using the exact processes and protocols that the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards uses to define standards of accomplished practice. In fact, Kristin Hamilton, the National Board's VP for Standards, participated in every planning session and all four of the 4-day, on-site meetings of the committee to ensure fidelity to the process.

The end result of this NEA-funded project is seven standards unpacked at length in the document, but their names are:

- Understanding the Profession
- Learning About Students
- Building Content Knowledge
- Engaging in Responsive Planning
- Implementing Instruction
- Using Assessments and Data
- Engaging in Reflective Practice

The seven cross-cutting themes are Cultural Competence, Fairness, Equity, and Diversity, Reflective Practice, Ethics, Collaboration, Social Justice and Advocacy, and Self-Efficacy.

The Educators Rising standards, which are freely available, can provide a road map for practitioners and leaders to use as a base when developing GYO content materials. The Kentucky Department of Education took this approach when formally adopting Educators Rising standards for its new Teaching and Learning Career Pathway, which launched in 2017.

For folks looking for essentially a precollegiate GYO in a box, an off-the-shelf option to consider is Teacher Cadets, which employs a fee-for-service model and includes curriculum and teacher training. The Teacher Cadet program is run by the South Carolina-based Center for Educator Recruitment, Retention, and Advancement (CERRA) and has been around for more than 30 years.

If you're looking to explore some strong precollegiate GYO curricula and you're not ready to buy into a fee-for-service model, I recommend checking out the Recruiting Washington Teachers program facilitated by the Professional Educators Standards Board in Washington state. With support from the state legislature, this program has built a compelling, culturally responsive, practice-focused curriculum for teenager who are aspiring educators, and it's freely available online.

It's necessary when considering launching or sustaining a precollegiate GYO program to have a content plan that goes beyond the high-school-teacher-will-figure-it-out approach, which unnervingly is the norm in far too many places.

SLIDE 5: For the delivery model of a precollegiate Grow Your Own program, it's important to consider our goals. We're trying to engage teenagers and guide them towards choosing for themselves to pursue teaching in their home community as a career.

This is an uphill challenge for many reasons. The ACT asks college-bound seniors on the way out the door in high school about their career choices and an all-time low of fewer than 5% indicate interest in teaching. Young people, if they're not engaged early are saying no thanks to teaching.

So, we need to engage them early. And we also need them to feel strong enough about their choice that they can withstand the avalanche of discouragement that will come with it from all directions in their lives. A PDK Poll from 2018 showed 54% of Americans would not want their children to become teachers, an all-time high. A 2015 survey of Georgia teachers showed that two-thirds of teachers in Georgia would not encourage a 12th grader to pursue teaching.

This is sobering but we must take action to sustain the future of teaching. And that's why, in order for an altruistic precollegiate to fall in love with teaching, to cultivate an identity as an educator, and to have armor against the inevitable discouragement, it's essential that their exploratory experience with teaching has to be deep and authentic so it can truly get into their bloodstream.

The delivery model for achieving that is embedding into credit-bearing courses during the school day. It can't be just a club or add-on for the students or the teacher running the program. It has to be institutionalized and taken seriously by all involved.

Career and technical education provides a vehicle for this kind of robust pathway of courses with work-based learning embedded. These can be great if you state and district are open to allocating some of the finite Perkins funding to these kinds of programs in the Education and Training Career Cluster.

Maryland is a promising example of this, where the state department of ed's Division of College and Career Readiness has partnered with its largest teacher-producing institution, Towson University, to develop Teacher Academy of Maryland, known as TAM. It's a 4-semester curriculum that comes with course codes a thumbs up from the state department of ed, and Towson provides a summer institute training for both new and returning TAM teachers, a Blackboard platform for virtual resource sharing and collaboration, and small scholarships to TAM students that come to Towson.

The 4 courses in the pathway are: Human Growth and Development through Adolescence, Teaching as a Profession, Foundations of Curriculum and Instruction, and the Education Academy Internship. Almost all of the 24 county-based districts in MD have at least one TAM program.

The work-based learning, or clinical experiences, in the program, are central to helping students really test-drive teaching. These are typically scaffolded, starting with some one-off observations and shadows, building up to some sustained assisting through returning to a single classroom on a regular basis, and culminating in a full internship--- think of it as student teaching lite--- that I mentioned as the capstone of the Teacher Academy of Maryland program.

Clinical practice is the highest leverage preservice experience and NEA research shows that working with students is what teachers rate every time they are surveyed as the top reason they entered teaching and the top reason they stay. So, as we try to attract bright young people to teaching we have to give them the most high-impact, rewarding, enjoying part of the job--- and that happens through work-based learning.

If a career academy or course sequence is a bridge too far, especially in rural communities where teachers are already stretched thin to cover the core curriculum, freestanding elective courses can be lower-hanging fruit to consider when launching a precollegiate GYO program. In New Mexico the leadership to launch a statewide precollegiate GYO initiative came from New Mexico State University, a flagship land grant institution. NMSU got a small \$25,000 planning grant to invite leaders from every district in the state to a kickoff conference in Las Cruces in the summer of 2015. Every attendee made commitments for 1, 3, and 5-year plans to get these programs going in their communities.

The next year almost all had extracurricular programs and in the following school year nearly half were able to convert them into courses in the school day. NMSU also took on the role as host of the Educators Rising New Mexico state affiliate, which made them the de facto coordinator, PD provider, and event planner to help the students and teachers in programs across the state engage in something beyond their school walls.

The delivery model of a precollegiate GYO should serve the goal of helping students feel that they're part of a community, part of a movement in addition to the day-to-day hands-on exploration of what teaching is all about.

SLIDE 6: Getting the right personnel coordinated in an important challenge and opportunity. Since there are so many moving parts here involving folks who are often silo-ed from one another---high school teachers facilitating the courses, district leaders in CTE, human resources, teacher quality, maybe transportation if the students have to go off-site for their clinical experiences, as well college of education staff or faculty, host teachers in field site placements.

The teacher leader in the high school running the day-to-day course and coordinating the student's clinical experiences is the central, most important player in this complex equation. They are the tip of the spear for recruiting students into that class. If they are respected and proactive, then their tapping and encouraging students to enroll will be very influential.

Ultimately, if a precollegiate GYO program is successful and these participating teenagers go on to be great teachers, when they tell their personal stories about how they became teachers, the first name they'll cite will be their teacher leader in their GYO program. It's necessary to make sure that the person at the high school tapped for this is well-equipped and well-supported, with unnecessary barriers removed like requiring a family and consumer sciences certification.

If two-thirds of Georgia teachers would discourage teaching, these teacher leaders need to come from that narrow pool of practitioners who want to be ambassadors for the profession, who want to pay forward the talent and expertise to the next generation. They need to be able to be very transparent and articulate and willing to be vulnerable about their craft. They need to be excellent practitioners and role models with a forward-looking, inspirational vision of what teaching can be, while also keeping it real with students. Ideally, this is an accomplished teacher who is looking to lead without leaving the classroom. National Board Certified Teachers, who have demonstrated their level of accomplished practice and reflectiveness have been effective GYO leaders, but school leaders should think broadly and strategically about which teacher to tap for this crucial opportunity.

Mobilizing support—like curriculum, PD, and an Educators Rising network that I mentioned earlier—are important and helpful ways to strengthen a precollegiate program and empower the teacher leader. Leadership at the district level can really buoy these efforts.

In Virginia Beach City Public Schools, all 11 high schools offer what they call Virginia Teachers for Tomorrow courses--- a side note—there are many names for these courses: Teacher Academy of Maryland, Teacher Cadet, Teachers for Tomorrow, Education and Training, Education Professions--- they all describe the exact same kind of opportunity. But in Virginia Beach, the superintendent has spearheaded a multi-faceted, multi-year recruitment and morale campaign called “Great Dreams need Great Teachers,” which includes opportunities to spotlight and celebrate the high school students in the GYO program and offers students whose portfolios meet expectations a Future Teacher Award, which is essentially a conditional teaching contract upon the student’s graduation from college and achievement of teacher licensure.

National Superintendent of the Year Dave Shuler in District 214 in the northwest Chicago suburbs is championing a similar strategy where more than 150 students across six high schools enrolling in the Educator Prep Career Pathway program and all 150 engaged in a signing ceremony, similar to how star athletes are treated, and the event was covered by local media including the Chicago Tribune.

So, when considering mobilizing personnel for a precollegiate Grow Your Own program, the teacher leader makes the program thrive or falter, a healthy cross-department collaboration is required to support the logistics of a GYO program, and then higher ed or district-based incentives can make the program prestigious and prominent—moving a community closer to cultivating the teaching workforce it needs.

SLIDE 7: Let’s move on to Community Focused Grow Your Own programs where I’ll move a bit faster.

When it comes to transitioning paraprofessionals, other school-based staff, or adults in the community into licensed teaching roles, it’s typically going to be a truncated prep structure relation to a traditional degree-based program.

For the content of what brand new teachers most need to know and be able to do when they’re moving quickly into teaching without a lot of prep, TNTP has developed “Fast Start,” which is a helpful, research-based guide. Fast Start names 3 important shifts to make from traditional prep programs:

1. FOCUS- A narrower curriculum focused only on the most essential teaching skills.
2. PRACTICE- An emphasis on practicing skills instead of just learning about them.

3. FEEDBACK- Intensive coaching that provides regular, specific feedback on changes to instructional techniques.

Within the narrower curriculum TNTP mentions in the first shift, it names 4 key skills for rookies:

1. Delivering lessons clearly
2. Maintaining high academic expectations
3. Maintaining high behavioral expectations
4. Maximizing instructional time

It also provides 4 essential techniques and other useful information. There's much more and I recommend reading the whole document if you're building a program that requires the rapid induction of new teachers of record. You'll find the link on the References slide of this deck.

The Para²A Center, based at the University of Colorado Denver, has won several federal grants to work with transitioning paraprofessionals to teaching roles and found that a cohort-based approach is essential to retaining participants. Folks in these programs need to be connected to others going on the same journey, and they need mentoring. Leaving them on their own is not a key to success.

Last, the STEP UP program at Los Angeles Unified School District offers paraprofessionals opportunities to transition into teaching with really comprehensive work. It includes:

1. Mentoring in regards to academic pathways, credential requirements and teacher preparation programs
2. Financial assistance in the forms of
 - a. Tuition Reimbursement -- Up to \$960 for community college and \$4,800 for university enrollment
 - b. Textbook Stipend -- Up to \$1,000 annually
 - c. Credential Testing (e.g. CBEST, CSET and RICA) fees and test preparation vouchers and/or reimbursements

The district also does twice-a-year forums to recruit paraprofessionals and offers Positive Behavior Intervention and Support (PBIS) Training in which paraprofessionals can earn a Registered Behavior Technician (RBT) certificate, which can be a stepping stone to pursuing a teaching license via the STEP UP program.

The tuition reimbursement piece is crucial. Financial barriers for earning a college degree and teaching license are certainly substantial, and it's been very important where state legislation has supported Grow Your Own programs like the North Carolina Teaching Fellows or Grow Your Own Illinois, although both programs have much smaller footprints than they did at the beginning of this decade due to budget cuts.

SLIDE 8: University Initiated programs have multiple levers available to them to advance a strong Grow Your Own agenda.

First, they can partner with districts to intentionally support specific populations of teacher candidates. Also, they can leverage scholarships and financial aid. For example, and this is in an urban context, the University of Houston offers what they call Teach Forward scholarships for HISD students to attend UH, then come back to teach in HISD. The fellows of Teach Forward Houston will earn a Bachelor of Science

in Teaching and Learning at University of Houston, before returning to the greater Houston community for a minimum of four years as an HISD classroom teacher and instructional leader on the front lines of education.

The scholarship and financial aid piece is enormous. In a rural context, as part of the first cycle of the Texas Grow Your Own grant, Texas Tech is placing 18 student teachers in 5 partner LEAs that have average population of 823. Each of the 18 Student teachers are receiving a \$22,000 stipend. They've been incentivized to go student teach back in their home communities.

Another compelling university-initiated model is recruiting altruistic college students who might be amenable to teaching but aren't ready to go all in into streamlined programs that offer prestige, impact, and don't add time to their schooling. UTeach is an innovative program replicated at 44 colleges across the country, including in Wisconsin at University of Wisconsin River Falls, where STEM majors are able to seamlessly double-major in education and receive a teaching degree and teaching job out of school. Cumulatively around 4,700 STEM teachers have entered the profession through UTeach.

SLIDE 9: And so, now that we approach the end of the final module in this Grow Your Own learning series, I encourage you to think big about what this could mean in your context, and who needs to be at the table asap to bring it into reality. You can copy the 5 questions from this slide and use them as a worksheet.

Grow Your Own programs are inherently optimistic about the future of teaching, and that can be a magnetic quality for many prospective allies and partners, who have all entered the education field because they care about the future.

Since the education sector has matured without Grow Your Own mechanisms built in, it's hard work to embed them in the system now. But the work of helping communities meet their workforce needs is crucial and inspirational and can be accomplished with the right mobilization and the right collaborators. Thank you for engaging in this module and for exploring this important work to be done.