

Video Transcript

Diversifying and Widening the Teacher Pipeline with Grow Your Own Programs

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DOUGLAS GAGNON: Hello, everyone, and welcome to our webinar—*Diversifying and Widening the Teacher Pipeline with Grow Your Own Programs*. My name is Douglas Gagnon. I'll be your facilitator today. And it looks like we have enough to get started.

So this webinar is hosted by REL Central. We are one of 10 regional education laboratories across the country that are funded by the U.S. Department of Education's Institute for Education Sciences. Our charge is to provide technical support and conduct applied research in the states of Colorado, Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska, North and South Dakota, and Wyoming. So as part of this work, we also conduct a number of research dissemination activities, such as this webinar.

And all of our work here is organized under what we call research partnerships or alliances. Here at REL Central we have 10 different research partnerships. One of these we call the Educator Pipeline Research Alliance. And this really focuses on the continuation of the educator pipeline. So it has focus areas within educator preparation, educator evaluation, and educator mobility.

So as part of this research alliance, this Grow Your Own (GYO) webinar fits squarely underneath that. So there is just a little background about where this webinar is coming from.

Thanks, Doug.

So with some technical details out of the way, let's turn into the content today. And first, just so you have a sense of the goals for this webinar, we have two goals broadly. One is to share, basically, an overview of the research of Grow Your Own programs and how they're being used to try to address issues of educator shortages, retention, and diversity. And then to add some color to this research, we also have two examples of current evidence-based GYO programs in our region. So we have representatives from the Teacher Cadet Program of Colorado and Columbia Public Schools Grow Your Own Teacher Development and COMOEd Programs.



So before we dive into the substance here, we wanted to take a couple poll questions to get a sense of the audience's familiarity with GYO in their own community. You should be able to, right now, answer this first poll question. And it's pretty straightforward. Just, are you aware of a GYO program in your community, be it your district, or even your state, one that you're aware of? We'll give you a few moments to answer that poll question.

And we should be seeing the results popping up soon. And there you have it. Oh, and folks went ahead and answered the second one. Perfect. So it looks like roughly two-thirds of people are aware of a GYO program. And of those aware, it looks like the majority of those programs target the high school area, although, pretty good representation across the spectrum with collegiate and professional programs as well. And of course, it could be the case that some of these GYO programs are targeting more than one of these areas or all three. So it seems like that the audience here, a good number of people is familiar with them and, more than that, familiar with exactly what they look like as well. Wonderful.

So moving on, let me introduce our presenters today. So as I mentioned, I'm facilitating, Douglas Gagnon, and my colleague Douglas Van Dine is coordinating. And with us today are Conra Gist, who is an associate professor of Curriculum and Instruction at the University of Houston; Michelle Dennis, who comes to us from the Colorado Teacher Cadet Program, and Nicolle Adair who comes to us from Columbia Public Schools.

So before I hand off to the rest of the presenters, I did want to give a really quick overview of Grown Your Own programs. We're coming from a shared foundation here. So just some commonalities across GYOs. Overall, they're seeking to both broaden and diversify the pool of candidates, as the name implies, by tapping from local educator pools or local sources of potential educators. And, as the polls indicated, that they can really take on a number of different strategies. They can recruit from middle or high schools or higher education levels. They can focus on particular communities as well, such as paraprofessionals, to try to help them become teachers, or teachers trying to become school leaders. And they can also try to tap into the college graduate pool that don't have teaching degrees to try to get them into the profession.

And one last commonality across GYOs is that they're almost always collaborative efforts, and they're normally done between a host of different partners, such as school districts, higher education institutions, and communities. So this is just a real broad-brush stroke of what you can expect if you're not familiar with GYO programs. And by the end of this webinar, hopefully, you'll know a lot more. So with that said, let me turn the reins over to Conra.

CONRA GIST: All right, so first of all, I want to say thank you to Doug, just for extending an invitation to talk about this work. I feel like GYO programs are a really important strategy in



terms of thinking about how we can work in more critical ways to diversify the teaching workforce.

And so the focus of my talk is really going to primarily center on a review of research literature that I conducted with Dr. Margarita Bianco and Dr. Marvin Lynn. And so first of all, this title I think is really important to emphasize—"Grow Your Own Programs and Teachers of Color: Examining Projects, Frameworks, and Research." And in particular, thinking about what's really sort of diving this interest around Grow Your Own programs?

So before really diving in deeply into the research literature, I think it's really important to think about the projects as these education and social issues that designers are attempting to solve by pushing Grow Your Own programs. And so I actually have a special issue that I organized through *Teacher Education Quarterly* that focuses specifically on Grow Your Own programs and Teachers of Color.

And one of the things that we sort of argue in that particular issue is really thinking about what the projects are that are driving the work. So, for example, one of the things that really could be driving this whole conversation around Grow Your Own programs is really this idea of the economic project. And we sort of talk about this idea of the economic project as primarily being focused on a commitment to addressing supply and demand issues, which is really just about making sure that we have bodies in the classroom and that they are certified in their content area. And so whenever we think about interests around Grow Your Own programs—one of the projects that seems to be pushing that conversation is really about this economic project of supply and demand.

Another one is thinking about the workforce development project. And the workforce development project that seems to be driving conversations around Grow Your Own programs is really primarily centered on this idea of making sure that we have parity in the classroom. Right? So thinking about what's the representation of Teachers of Color in comparison to students of color, for example, or how are we making sure that the hiring policies and practices are really being tailored in a way to be responsive to the needs of Teachers of Color?

Another project that seems to be driving the work is also centered around the educator preparation project, which if you think about educator preparation programs (EPPs), which I know most folks are very familiar with—is that they're predominately white and female. And so when we think about this idea of diversifying the teacher workforce, people are very interested in Grow Your Own programs as a way to sort of address that particular issue.

And then, finally, we make the case in this issue that in part we really can think about, in looking at those three projects as connected to a broader justice project that's really around



making sure that we address anti-racist structures and practices, and pedagogical approaches that keep Teachers of Color out of the profession. And so I just say those projects to kind of set up kind of the lens that my colleagues and I actually used to develop this review of literature.

And in this particular case, this is featuring research from the *Journal of Teacher Education*, featured in the 2019 winter issue. And one of the things that we were thinking about is really looking at Teachers of Color with local community commitments, experiences, and expertise that increase our likelihood of being effective teachers and remaining in the teaching profession. And so our research review really, sort of, looked at pipelines: middle high school pipelines, community leader pipelines, and gender-specific pipelines. And we didn't focus as much on career-changers, although they were—sort of—included in our review of literature.

And so, one of the things that we wanted to do in this review of literature is to make sure that we didn't necessarily just focus on programs in general, but we really sort of were looking at—how do we address the needs of Teachers of Color at the recruitment level, preparation, and also retention?

And so—we really primarily looked at what was available in terms of the literature around Teachers of Color and Grow Your Own programs in two different buckets. One was focused on community and school teacher pipelines and so that was primarily targeting the paraprofessional and community activists type of Grow Your Own programs. And on the other end, we were looking at middle and high school teacher pipelines and trying to figure out how we kind of take folks from the 6–12 level in our schools and bring them into the teacher profession. And so what I'm going to present in this section are just some highlights as it relates to recruitment preparation and retention.

So if you look on the left side, for community and school teacher pipelines—one of the things that we found in our review of literature is that programs had a commitment to local Teachers of Color—really were about seeing and believing in the community cultural wealth of Teachers of Color. So they really were sort of valuing the capital that they actually came in with. It was not a colorblind approach. It was very intentional in terms of the kind of folks that they were trying to bring into the profession. And they also—which is really key too, had academic, social, and financial supports that were tied to those efforts. On the flip side, when we're looking at this review of literature on Grow Your Own programs at the middle and high school level, typically those structures included teacher clubs, double-credit offerings, or intro to teaching courses or career fairs as a way to think about how we might engage folks in the teaching profession.

However, there was a limited focus on community culture wealth for Teachers of Color and this is a really important point early on in terms of our findings around the research literature. That



while there was this commitment to think about how to increase interest in teaching in general, there wasn't really in lot of the programs that we looked at—with the exception for the Pathways the Teaching Program, which Dr. Bianco leads up—didn't really have this concrete focus of building off of the community of cultural wealth that Teachers of Color were bringing into the profession.

At the next level, we were looking at the review of literature around preparation and Grow Your Own programs. And so, on the left side, we were sort of looking at, what are some of the common themes around community and school teacher pipelines? And at this particular level, I think it's important to note that on the one hand, they were trying to emphasize recruiting Teachers of Color who had this community cultural wealth that would make them impactful in the future. Right?

But we also find that there was very high attrition rates at the preparation level. And these were due to financial barriers, difficulty with certification exams, and rigid and inflexible program structures, which is a really important point. So that while they had this explicit recruitment focus, the structures were not actually in place at the ed prep level to be able to do the work to keep a lot of these folks in the profession.

And then another common theme was just in terms of time. The time seemed to range from two to eight years and in some cases...longer. And we thought that this was an important finding in terms of the research literature. Because depending on the project that's driving the design of the Grow Your Own program, this is not a type of quick fix—getting folks in the classroom immediately type of option—if you want to go that particular route.

And then on the right-hand side, thinking about preparation as it relates to middle and high school teacher pipelines, we really found, in our review of literature, scant curricular focus on the community cultural wealth for Teachers of Color. Obviously, there was a focus on best pedagogical practices in general, in terms of teachers' work. But there wasn't this kind of intentional focus on the pedagogical needs of Teachers of Color. And there wasn't always a clear articulation between the high school recruitment pipeline and the educator preparation pipeline, which we actually saw as huge. Because you can do a lot of work trying to increase interest at the 6–12 level. But if there aren't agreements in place to make sure that they make that transition at the educator preparation level, it's almost like the work is in vain.

And then, finally, we found of the programs there were very few critical education perspectives that really took a critical race perspective—trying to understand why issues of educational inequity continue to persist in our society. We saw very little of that in terms of the programs that we actually reviewed at the middle and high school level.



And finally, in terms of retention this was really kind of interesting across both levels. So on the one hand, there are very, very, very few studies that actually look at the retention impact of folks who graduate from Grow Your Own programs. However, of the few that we did have access to the findings were promising. Right?

And on the other hand, of these few programs that had some kind of retention impact there—were no supports in place to actually help them after they graduated. And so it appeared to us at first glance that retention appears to be taking place in the absence of programmatic supports for these teachers. And so, in some ways they were finding ways to persist in the absence of the kind of supports that we would think, theoretically, they would need to keep them there. Which we think this kind of raises some really interesting research questions around this particular pool—this teacher pool of the community activist paraprofessional or teacher.

And then on the flip side, for the retention of middle high school teacher pipelines there really is a vacuum of placement outcomes for program graduates turned teachers. So—re-translation, we really don't know almost anything at all about the impact of when people graduate from these middle and high school programs; where they actually end up, teaching and how impactful they are. Most of what we were able to find in our initial review of the literature primarily focused on bridge programs that are for retention in terms of making sure that they make the transition from their high schools to their educator preparation programs, but nothing from—very little I should say in terms of what happens from the preparation to actually being placed in schools.

And so the conceptual framing for our review of literature on Grow Your Own programs and Teachers of Color is important because it really kind of shaped the sources that we looked at.

So as I'm sure you can already tell, we really looked at this work of developing teachers as an integrated system of support, and so we were looking at recruitment, preparation, and retention as kind of interlocking. So if you want to sort of talk about this idea of Grow Your Own programs being useful in terms of the diversification and widening of the pipeline, then we really have to look at it on a teacher development continuum. We can't look at these components in isolation.

We also, based on our own critical perspectives and how we come to this work, we really grounded GYO programs in the grassroots racial justice movement initiatives. And really kind of thinking about a commitment to academic professional development of local community Teachers of Color. And really sort of thinking about folks who are from the community, for the community and committed to the community.



And then we also—really, in our analysis, which I’m sure came across in terms of presenting the review of literature in terms of findings, we really were kind of framing Teachers of Color as possessing a community cultural wealth that imbues them with an array of knowledge, skills, and abilities to effectively teach Black and Brown youth.

And I won’t go into this because I suspect we’re probably running short on time. But, essentially, we were sort of really thinking about this idea of community cultural wealth, as connected to these six different types of capital: aspirational, navigational, social, resistant, linguistic, and familial. And the thesis, essentially, is that we really see Teachers of Color as bringing value to the work and to the field that we typically ignore and that we were really looking to highlight what these strengths were.

And so in terms of what do we what do we take from all of this, there are a couple of best practices that we really thought that it was important to emphasize in terms of people who want to develop their programs with what we know from the research thus far. And the first is that we need to interrogate and commit to addressing race and racism from an intersectional lens in relation to teacher education faculty, and teacher candidates, program design and curriculum, and program and college leadership. So when we’re having this conversation about wanting to diversify the teaching workforce and Grow Your Own programs, that interrogating race and racism has to be in the center of that.

And I have a link here from the Institute of Research on Teachers of Color that Dr. Kohli has been doing for some time at the University of California - Irvine, that folks should definitely check out because she’s basically offering a framework for what that work can look like for a teacher education faculty and teacher candidates.

The second point is that we really felt that we needed to think about incentivizing GYO program development with a commitment to historically marginalized communities and people of color. And that has a particular focus. So we were really looking at programs that recruit community activists and paraprofessionals, the folks that we really have not paid much attention to in terms of our [INAUDIBLE] programs. We’ve primarily looked to career-changers, and folks who already have degrees.

In our review of literature, we intentionally focused on the people that we overlook—folks of color that we typically overlook. And so I also have a link here for the Call Me Mister Program, which is focused on recruiting African American males into the field. It has a very particular focus on the kinds of men that they recruit from their program.

We also emphasize the requirement for rigorous and credible research on Grow Your Own programs at each stage of teacher development. And so that’s underscored by the way that we



design our review of literature, that we really start to think about research at every level. And then, also, value and fund, local community research on nontraditional and historically marginalized populations, involving nontraditional methodologies.

So one of the things that I've organized as a teacher testimony project that really centers the voices of Teachers of Color as being able to kind of have something to contribute around policy conversations for what they need and how they can actually remain in the classroom. And so part of this conversation around needing rigorous and credible research, often leaves out the Teachers of Color themselves who have the most to say about this work. And so we have to value and fund that work so that their voices are a part of that conversation.

And then, finally, we need to orchestrate GYO task force and collaboration in partnership with key stakeholders in the local schools, scholars, community organizations and leaders, community colleges, career and technical education, and EPP—so re-translation that, a lot of times the folks who are doing this work and having conversations about Grow Your Own don't involve the people on the ground leading the work, trying to make sense of it, trying to find ways to make sure that we have high-quality Teachers of Color who come from the community in the classroom. And because this is really an emerging field of research, one of the things that we argue is that people need to organize across collectives to do this work.

And so a good model of that is actually the GYO collective, which is really kind of a partnership of different critical GYO programs who are trying to make sense of how we get more folks of color in the classroom from critical social justice perspectives.

So in conclusion, research needs, they should be obvious at this point. But just to go through really quickly, that we need to understand and address preparation, structures, and policies that push out or retain a significant number of aspiring teachers. So that finding that a lot of folks who are coming from the community in leader pipeline were actually dropping out because there were high attrition rates; there's something that we have to do at that preparation level. And there are multiple things.

And I think that's an entirely separate presentation and conversation—but that we have to do to fix what's happening, that these program structures were not created for folks from nontraditional backgrounds. If you want to bring them into the profession, we have to think about how to create structures to be able to do that work.

But we need to investigate and implement various types of teaching learning supports needed to develop GYO teachers' academic disciplinary knowledge and pedagogical practice. So we can't make any assumptions about what people bring to the work. And then we need to identify factors that influence retention of teachers, despite school-based challenges.



So one of the things that we found is that from the limited research on retention related to paraprofessionals and community activist and leaders from GYO pipelines is that some of them were staying. There were some retention there. But why and how? Especially without any kind of program supports.

And then, finally, we need to take up empirical and longitudinal studies investigating GYO teachers' impact on student learning, engagement in school context. We just don't know hardly anything about that, and we need to know that. Because as we continue to make arguments for these programs, this is the kind of research that we need to have to back up those claims. And I'll be happy to answer questions as we proceed.

DOUGLAS GAGNON: So we'll take a couple of minutes here in case anybody has any questions. Feel free to type in the Q&A box, and I will pass them on to the presenter. I don't see any at this point, but we'll have more question-and-answer time at the end of the whole presentation. So if you have any questions about Dr. Gist's presentation, feel free to keep typing them in the question-and-answer box. And we will move to our next presenter.

MICHELLE DENNIS: I'm Michelle Dennis, and I'm the coordinator for the Colorado Teacher Cadet Program. I'm happy to be here today. I'm going to share with you what our program specifically does here in Colorado in regards to trying to really promote teaching, particularly among our high school students here.

So, Teacher Cadet, we have a very strong mission, and that's to encourage students who really possess those exemplary interpersonal academic and leadership skills to consider a teaching career. And that's among all students. We want to provide these students, these community leaders with insight about teaching in schools.

The goal of the program is to ultimately—hopefully—have students come out of the high school who go into teacher prep programs. But also, equally as important, we want to make sure that we are giving students the opportunity to learn about the landscape of education and enable them to become very strong advocates in their communities for education programs and empower them to really have a voice as their families grow, and they have their own children and go out into the community and access education.

And then on the next slide, we're going to talk a little bit about our historical perspective—Teacher Cadet. In 1985, Teacher Cadet began really in South Carolina. That's where the original program and curriculum were created and implemented. In 1999, over 23,000 students completed Teacher Cadet in South Carolina. And then, in 2001, Colorado had some family and consumer science teachers who became very interested in the program. And two programs were piloted in 2001.



As of 2017, Teacher Cadet has been replicated in over 38 states. As of 2018-19, we have 29 active programs for Teacher Cadet across the state of Colorado. When we take data and survey students in our programs, we found that 80 percent of students indicated that the program helped them develop a positive perception of teaching. And as we all know, that's one of the challenges in recruitment and retention is to really look at, what is the current climate in regards to attitudes about teaching as a profession? And are teachers held up in high regard? And what are some of those challenges? And so if we can enable students to feel positive and empowered by making that decision to become an educator, we feel that that is a huge part of the battle in really growing our own teacher pipeline.

Teacher Cadet is a year-long course. It's considered, in a lot of the schools and honors elective—it's designed specifically for juniors and seniors in high school, and it is considered a college-level course. Students do have to do a significant amount of college-level writing, as well as that higher-level thinking and problem solving throughout the coursework.

There is some enrollment criteria. We do ask that students have a 3.0 GPA. However, there are exceptions to that. As you also probably know, being educators, working in education, some of your star students, as juniors and seniors, might have struggled in middle school or in their freshman and sophomore year. There are a lot of kids that would be fantastic educators. They just had some challenges that really lowered that GPA threshold for them. So we do ask that our Teacher Cadet educators, when they have students come to them interested in the program, that they consider a whole host of things when they're looking at whether or not to have students enroll. We want them to look beyond the GPA. We want them to look at, is this student passionate about being a leader? Do they possess a true desire to become an educator? Are they enthusiastic? Have they done work to improve their academic standing? And, most importantly, do they have just kind of that drive that goes far beyond academic ability to really take a look at them as potential educators? And we're hoping that Teacher Cadet really helps to inspire them to move forward.

There is an application process and a statewide syllabus that is utilized by all of our programs. And it is a prescribed curriculum. There are required Colorado artifacts. So our students actually produce specific artifacts. We'll go over some of that information here in a second. They produce a portfolio that really showcases these artifacts that they've created. And then, they also receive certificates for their field experience hours and a portfolio credit recommendation so that they can actually go to any post-secondary institution of their choice and potentially solicit credit for the hard work that they've done. And we'll talk about some college opportunities here in a second. So we can go ahead to the next slide.

Teacher Cadet content—



There are three primary focuses in the program. We work on experiencing learning, we want students to learn about self-assessment, styles and needs, growth and development, diversity, special needs, and then barriers to learning. In regards to experiencing the teaching profession, this is extremely important. We talk about the history and trends in education, structure and governance, certification and employment, how do students even—you know once they get out of school, how do they work on certification and getting that job? And then we talk heavily about ethics and professionalism in education.

And then this is an extremely important portion of the coursework is getting these students out to experience the classroom. We want them to learn about teacher roles, styles and strategies for teaching, classroom culture, discipline, technology, assessment, lesson planning—really, how can they expand their portfolio. And we want them to have a field experience where they actually get to go out and work for 50 hours with another educator, whether it be elementary, middle school, or a high school educator, we place those students with respected educators so that they can actually feel, touch, look, interact and really get, for all intents and purposes, a small student teacher experience.

So right now, we're actually in our 19th year in Colorado. We do have 29 active programs. We cover, right now, 14 Colorado school districts. Colorado Teacher Cadet is coordinated under the Colorado Community College System and the career and technical education (CTE) system here in Colorado, specifically under the Education and Training career cluster.

Teacher training and ongoing classroom support is offered to our Teacher Cadet educators. We use a PLC (professional learning community) model of teacher collaboration and ongoing professional development for any of our trained teacher educators. We have asked several active college partners. We are involved in a significant rural initiative to recruit and retain teachers—right now. And we do base our program on standards and curriculum aligned to the Colorado Teacher Quality Standards.

In regards to what we're really working on in Colorado for implementation of Teacher Cadet, we try to help those schools and districts interested in the program understand that there is career and technical education funding available to them. And that has been a huge, huge benefit for us—in that anyone, any district, any school that takes on Colorado Teacher Cadet—they have the option of applying for federal Perkins funding—as well as Colorado Technical Act funding to help reimburse the cost of professional development, the cost of curriculum—as well as reimbursement for the FTE (full-time equivalent) salary for that coursework.



Teachers do have to get a Colorado Career and Technical Education credentialing that is attached to their teaching license. We have curriculum training and professional developments that's offered. At the state level, we have a state training team. We currently have four state trainers. And we hold one annual new Colorado Teacher Cadet educator training, generally in June. In the Denver area, we are, however, looking at expanding into other parts of the state, given that we really do need to expand this opportunity to grow teachers in our rural communities.

There are districts in the state who currently offer English and elective credit for the program. There's program accountability. We have attached this program to career and technical education funding because there are certain criterion that programs have to follow in order to continue getting that funding, things like making sure that there is quality program standards being utilized; making sure that the program's offered to a diverse, wide demograph[ic] of students, that it's available to all students; making sure that we offer students leadership opportunities within that classroom, so there is a great deal of program accountability.

We also make sure that our teacher educators continue to develop their skills, take part in statewide required Colorado Teacher Cadet education development. It's a rigorous curriculum. Again, the Colorado developed portfolio artifacts were put together in collaboration with our college partners so that students who work through the high school piece of the program really get an overview that's equivalent to the introduction to education courses at the college level. And we do student data collection.

Student data collection, though, is really one of those pieces that we need to work on. And that was indicated in the earlier presentation, that we really do need to do a better job of figuring out, where do our students go from here? What is their employment rate? Do they get through their four-year program? Do they get placed in classrooms? So that is something we are currently working on in Colorado Teacher Cadet in collaboration with the Colorado Department of Education, as well as the Colorado Department of Higher Education, so that we can figure out a better data collection methods so that we really are able to talk about the overall impact of these teacher recruitment programs, particularly at the high school level.

So some historical milestones, over 4,000 Colorado students have taken Colorado Teacher Cadet as of May 2018. Obviously, we'll collect the 2019 data. And again, we do a pre-survey and a post-survey of our students in Teacher Cadet. And from our most recent post-surveys, we found that 75 percent of our students do state at the end of the program that they do choose to go into teaching. About 11 percent of them are undecided on the career in education after they experienced Teacher Cadet.



And then 14 percent of those students currently are stating that because of what they've learned about becoming a teacher, they would choose careers other than teaching. And there's an incredible amount of value in that, so that we have students that really are going into post-secondary education with a clear view of what they want to do. This helps them financially, so that they're not spending money on a program that they won't complete. It also helps them to really have a clearer view of the direction they really want to go. And then, of course, we really want to inspire them to go out and talk to other people about the importance of quality educators and how they can support that in their communities.

So here's a map of our current Teacher Cadet programs. And I'm also happy to share a list of schools as well for people who are interested in knowing where we're located. We definitely, if you look at the map—we need to spread our wings. And that goes for all of our teacher recruitment and preparation programs in Colorado.

We all have a collaborative desire to make sure that we are creating a pathway for students across the state that really, really will enable a student, regardless of where they're located, enable them to really feel like they can access an opportunity to become an educator. We want to inspire them. So we do need to be more collaborative with other programs in our state, really to positively impact teacher workforce growth in Colorado.

This is just a slide talking about some of the resources that we do use in Teacher Cadet. *Experiencing Education*, the 11th edition curriculum, is the Teacher Cadet curriculum. Again, it has been revised 11 times through South Carolina, which is actually very positive. Because that tells us that as the challenges in education and really preparing teachers evolve, that curriculum is being responsive to that as well. And we do use a supplemental college text called *Becoming a Teacher* in our program.

And we do have significant connections with higher education. Of course, we have curriculum alignment to the Colorado Teacher Quality Standards, but we also offer concurrent enrollment opportunities and transcript credit for Colorado Teacher Cadet. Examples of college partnerships that we currently hold—we work with Colorado State University - Fort Collins, CU (University of Colorado) - Boulder, University of Northern Colorado, we are working with Metro[politan] State University [of Denver], and then the 13 community colleges in Colorado offer articulated credit for what the equivalent of EDU221 to our Teacher Cadet students who successfully complete the program the student benefits of the program, they develop leadership skills. They build those critical presentation skills. They really get an inside look at education as a career.

We are hoping that they get that rich experience of the intrinsic reward of teaching. We want to expand their decision-making experiences. And then begin development of common EDU



artifacts based on Colorado teacher license. Students get to build that portfolio. And then, of course, they get to earn field experience and credit towards teacher preparation programs at the college level.

We have some very strong program visions for Colorado Teacher Cadet that we're working on, and we are always a work in progress. We really want students to have access to a Teacher Cadet program in every district in Colorado, whether it's a rural, urban, or suburban school. We want to strengthen the teacher pathway by linking middle school students to high school programs that continue into college teacher education programs.

And then, of course, we want to eventually have a state leadership position and funding for the administration, training, professional development, articulation and public relations of the Teacher Cadet program. Right now, our four trainers are full-time Colorado Teacher Cadet educators. So you can imagine that the workload is pretty extensive, but we're hoping that we can expand opportunities for other Teacher Cadet educators to really help spread the word and do that training across the state.

And I believe that is all I have for now. And I would love to entertain any questions you have.

DOUGLAS GAGNON: So we did have a couple of questions come in, and we have one for Conra at the end that I can toss out, too. One of the questions, Michelle, was, how does this relate to or differ from the Ready Set, Teach or Educators Rising?

MICHELLE DENNIS: In regards to the difference, Colorado Teacher Cadet is specifically an equivalent to an introduction to teaching course at the college level. Educators Rising, actually, as far as the curriculum difference, I can't state specifically the differences in those two curriculums. But what I can say is students who participate in Teacher Cadet have historically had the opportunity to participate in the leadership side of Educators Rising in that student leadership component.

DOUGLAS GAGNON: Great. And then one other question, do you have any information or stats on the demographic of students, how many of them might be students of color that have completed the program?

MICHELLE DENNIS: I honestly would be glad to offer that and send that out. Right now, the demographics do represent those school districts that are on that map. The demographics of students in the classroom will reflect the demographic of those schools in those districts. So I would be glad to offer—CTE, when you are a career and technical education program, we do collect data on student demographics, and those reports are actually made public. And I'm very happy to offer today's participants links to those public reports.



DOUGLAS GAGNON: Great, thank you very much. So then moving on to our last presenter, we have Nicolle Adair from Columbia Public Schools.

NICOLLE ADAIR: Good afternoon, everyone. I am just going to jump right in. My name is Nicolle Adair. Our program is actually two-fold here with Columbia Public Schools in Columbia, Missouri. Home Grown, which is the pipeline for students who are interested in becoming educators, you can start this program as young as eighth grade, and then you transition onto the college piece, as we track our students the entire time and retain them the entire time. Once they transition to college, they become COMOEd college students or COMOEd scholars. So you look at our district. Initially, this program came out of a need for more students of color, as there are, within our district, 39 percent of our students are students of color, and 7.8 percent—teachers of color. and so, as a community, we really felt like there was a need to have students who are from our community and are students of color in order to have more representation within our district.

This entire program came from the concepts within our—

I'm going to move on to the next slide, actually. Obviously, there's a discussion. This coalition of unlikely partners within our community, it actually was instigated by a community group that is called, Worley Street Roundtable.

They went to the superintendent and said—we feel like there's—and Worley Street Roundtable is kind of the grassroots community organization that works with a lot of social justice issues locally, and they came to our superintendent and said, we really feel like there is a need for a homegrown program specifically recruiting students of color, that attract students from elementary school all the way through high school.

And then, once they become seniors in high school, they can apply for a scholarship to one of our local colleges, go to school tuition free, room and board free. Books are provided by a local book exchange that we have here—just completely everything free and have the support of a district employee that can support them through the entire process.

During that time, a committee was pulled together. And everyone agreed with the need and the mission. And out of that was born Grow Your Own and COMOEd. The schools that participate as our partner colleges—and schools are Lincoln University, which is a historically Black college university in Jefferson City, Missouri; the University of Missouri Columbia; Central Methodist, Columbia College, and Stephens College.



Within our community for Grow Your Own and COMOEd, there are grassroots people, retired teachers, presidents of all of the colleges and universities, deans of the education department—every single type of stakeholder in order to support our students who are interested in becoming educators, they apply in order to participate in this program. There are only 20 spots available.

So we will take students starting in eighth grade. We support them the entire time to retain them. They intern during summer school months. They're paid 10 dollars—so they intern during summer school, in the month of June. They're paid 10 dollars an hour. They cannot miss a day. They are there every single day. And once they complete their internship, I meet with them throughout the school year. We have different activities, just to do check-ins with them. Once they apply for our program within middle school and when they're younger—once they apply, they do not have to reapply as long as they are meeting the requirements to participate in the program.

In other words, once you're in, you're in unless you actively say, "I no longer want to participate." When we look at the slides here, this is kind of what we call, our map for teacher educator success. This was birthed kind of out of our committee. And it's a collaboration of all of the partners that are involved with developing our teachers in our teacher education program with Columbia Public Schools.

So our stakeholders include an organization that's called DAP, which is the Diversity Awareness Partnership. Each one of our first and second year teachers that come within our school district participate in equity training. Our board participates in equity training. Everyone that's within the district really has embraced the need for equity and diversity in order to ensure that our students have every single opportunity to be clear representations of themselves.

When we look at the timeline for our Grow Your Own program, we start to talk to students in February for the new positions, the new spots that are available. And this can be kind of tricky. When we look at our application process—in June there are 20 students that participate in the internship program, even if it's a college student.

And by September—mid-September, I send out an email. I touch base and say, "Are you still interested in participating in the program?" I then, in January, again, say, "Are you still interested in participating in the program?" In general, this program has been in place since 2015. Last summer, I only had two spots available. This summer, I have one spot available because there are only 20 spots for students to participate. So I have one spot available this year.



The goal, as I've mentioned before, is retention, retention, retention. So we embrace our students in order to ensure that they want to participate—that they are feeling supported when we talk about all of the teacher certification tests. We provide prep for them every single step of the way—from the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid), to professional dress. We provide financial awareness, financial literacy, career and personal development, part of my role is I support those students the entire time.

When the students become seniors in high school and they applying for—when they are transitioning to the COMOEEd team, they're applying for the scholarships with the committee. All of the seniors have the opportunity to apply for the scholarship.

Ideally, as I supported them the entire time, I can kind of hone in on areas they need to work on, looking at their ACT scores, looking at their time management skills, professional dress. Are you taking enough rigorous classes? Are you involved in activities?

And sometimes, within our scholarship application process, we also look at students who may not—they may be the only support person financially for their family. It could be within their family that they are not able to participate in after-school activities because they have to work. I have one student that has virtually lived independently and on her own since she was 16-years-old. Actually, that's two now.

Many of my students, they possess grit. It's just having a support person and actually a community of persons to help them to navigate some of those biases and barriers that may be in place that we, even as a district, are not aware of. And my role and my job is to point those things out, help them navigate the system, provide them support all the way through, from middle school through high school. They go off to college here locally. They come back to our district, and they owe four years back. And they come back starting as new teachers with new teacher salaries with zero debt. Zero debt.

And can we go to the next slide, please. Thank you.

When I look at this within our first year with Columbia, our first cohort—because we've worked a year and a half trying to get this off the ground, our community really embraced this program and really has done a great job. And so when I look at my partner colleges that are involved in providing full tuition scholarships, room and board is provided, all of their lab fees, it was really the entire community kind of embraced this program, and so I decided to show how. This is our local newspaper. Can I have the next slide, please?

This is actually Cohort 2. Some of our students that are in Cohort 2 that are actually—two out of three of them are actually first-generation college students—and some of those challenges that



come along with it—many of our students, not all, but some are first-generation college students. They’re preparing to take the teacher certification—as they’re—they’re preparing to take—even in preparation for the ACT.

All of those different things, nuances, that they needed to really kind of focus on to make sure that they were prepared for because I know them so well—and our community knows them so well, and the HR department knows them, and the payroll department—every single step of the way, every single step of the way, we feel like as a community we’ve embraced them in order for them to be successful and come back to be employed within our district. Can I have the next slide, please?

This is actually Monica Naylor. One piece that’s really important to our success within COMOEd and the Grow Your Own program, the woman on the left, Monica Naylor, started a Teacher Cadet program here. It ended...I believe in ‘98. And the piece that kind of was different from Monica was that there wasn’t a college tuition piece that was added on, that was just recently added on when we brought it back. Monica, along with a committee of stakeholders that I’ve mentioned before, really—they were very passionate about bringing the program back and the importance of having diversity within the district.

And she really, really thinks it’s important. She discusses mentoring all the time within the community and with me and is really an incredible mentor to me and to our students that participate in this program. And so I just always want to make sure that we continue to give her a shot-out and honor her. Are there any questions at all?

DOUGLAS GAGNON: So anybody have any specific questions for Nicolle? We do have a couple that we’ll come back to at the very end, but let’s wait one more minute for anything on Nicolle. Alright. Doug, do you want to do final questions for all three presenters that are hanging out before we do the closing?

DOUGLAS VAN DINE: Sure. It looked like there were some more general questions that we could address right now.

DOUGLAS GAGNON: Right. There was one for Dr. Gist that came in asking, “What are some of the structural barriers for teachers of color inside of the teacher prep programs?” I don’t know if you could answer that one, Dr. Gist.

CONRA GIST: Yes. So first, part of the issue is that the programs are designed to support and successfully graduate the students who traditionally occupy our programs, which are predominately White female students. And so when we’re thinking about bringing in Teachers of Color, male Teachers of Color, folks from the local community who may have some college,



may come from school settings that haven't adequately prepared them, then we have to think about what it means to kind of structure a program so that it ensures that they successfully complete as well.

And so first of all, as part of that, it's thinking about the selection criteria the programs actually have in place. Are they actually designed in such a way to bring them into the program? Also, the content of the courses themselves, some of the research that we looked at found that some teacher candidates of color found the curriculum itself not to be relevant, to be colorblind.

The timing in which the coursework actually takes place, in particular for folks who are part of the paraprofessional program. And then also because—which we haven't talked about as much, but because testing is such a huge barrier, part of it is thinking about what do we do beyond just the testing and the class that they can sign up for—or tutoring? And so I've been really interested in research that looks at how do we offer courses that really—and not just the courses in a traditional sense of a semester, but what does it mean to reimagine the kind of courses that we offer students who come into our program who may have some skills that they need to brush up on, but to do it in such a way that really supports deep and enduring learning over time? And that really means doing something differently around the kind of courses that we're actually offering.

And then, also thinking about the faculty who are part of the programs as well. So if we think that Teachers of Color matter for K–12 students and they also a matter for teacher candidates of color, as well. and so—we also have a representation issue in our programs because that speaks to mentorship opportunities, Teachers of Color feeling like they have someone that really understands their perspective.

So those are just a few. But really, I try to make that opening point that it's kind of like if you imagine a program structure that's not created for you, you really have to reimagine, what would it mean to design it in such a way that we would ensure that everyone's able to actually make it through?

DOUGLAS GAGNON: Great. Great. Thank you. And along those same lines, a similar question that follows up on that. Are you aware of anything that prep programs are doing to support para-educators in taking and passing licensure exams? That seems to be a big barrier for those para-educators.

CONRA GIST: Yeah, so that's kind of what I was alluding to in terms of thinking about not just offering test prep courses. So, for example, I think that the lead-teacher program in New York City is doing some really interesting work around not just offering a Saturday class, but



redesigning courses to really fit the needs of students who are struggling in particular content areas.

And so even kind of then thinking about this idea of, what does it mean to have a yearlong unit of study that really explores enduring understandings of the discipline around particular content areas, for example, in math, or writing, or reading. So some of that work is taking place, but we need to go further. And part of, I think, where we are in the field right now is trying to trying to get folks to think about, okay, so design a program that I can go buy tomorrow to do this work, what would it mean to try to design it in such a way that we ensure that folks get through the program?

And the best comparison, for me, is thinking about K–12, how we move from not just this rote teaching, but how do we do it in such a way that it's deep and lasts over time? And our coursework in ed prep is not really designed to do work in that way. But it should be if we want to bring in these folks into the profession.

DOUGLAS GAGNON: Great, thank you. One question for Nicolle, and then two general questions, if we have time. Nicolle, do you have any advice on how to begin the process of finding financial support within the community for a Grow Your Own program?

[INAUDIBLE]

NICOLLE ADAIR: What I can tell you is what we did. I do think a big part of it is because our board here and the superintendent really, really felt that it was important and valued the importance of recruiting teachers of color within our community, within our partner colleges. and education departments within those partner colleges, they also saw a lack thereof of teacher candidates of color.

And so it was a win-win for us to all kind of get around the table, and create this program, and create a contract that truly [INAUDIBLE] around the table, and our students sign a contract that they will go to school for free. Everyone is supporting them all the way through every single step of the way. And then, they can come back and work within our community.

So I would say the first step is, if you're attempting to look at ways to finance programs like this, retired teachers come forward all of the time. Stakeholders within the community, local colleges and universities come forward. That's just what we've seen. Our board is really involved and engaged. They believe—even when we're talking about people who may not be within the field of education—our community really believes strongly in creating a pipeline of—programs of people who live in this community, stay in this community, and we invest in those that are from this community, and we retain them.

DOUGLAS GAGNON: Great, thank you. So then for any of the presenters, a question from Robert Mitchell. Is there any evidence that Grow Your Own teachers have higher levels of retention in their local schools? And, similarly, is there any correlation with teacher effectiveness? So from any of the three of you, any thoughts on that?

CONRA GIST: Well, I'll jump in on that. I mean—I think that's one of the things that we were really interested in exploring in terms of our review of literature and Grow Your Own programs. And the short answer is, yes, there is some evidence, and I would encourage you to read our review of literature. It's in the *Journal of Teacher Education*, "Examining Grow Your Own Programs Across the Teacher Development Continuum." And the last part of that continuum is retention. And so what we found is that there is some individual program cases that show that there are some high levels of retention—and the studies that we reviewed, the retention rates ranged from a little over 60 percent to 95 percent, depending on the program that we were actually looking at. There's a whole set of questions around why that variance may actually exist. There was a really early study done at the beginning of 2000 that looked at some of the differences between para-folks who were engaged in teaching through the Peace Corps or through emergency certification who were traditional paras.

And in their review, they found that para-educators were actually more likely to stay and remain in the classroom. There's also some kind of really interesting work around—looking at does it matter if you're a teacher aide first in terms of your effectiveness early on as an elementary teacher? And so there's a study coming from a GYO program that's a paraprofessional pipeline, for example. There's some indication that those teachers might be more impactful. But one of the things that we end with in our review of literature is the need of research that really does kind of a systematic investigation of impact. And that is still lacking in the field currently.

DOUGLAS GAGNON: Great. Nicolle or Michelle, anything from your programs?

[INAUDIBLE]

MICHELLE DENNIS: I was gonna say in regards to Teacher Cadet, I know that some of our longstanding Teacher Cadet educators have talked about students who have come back and come back and taught at their schools. It's not a large number. And, again, one of the challenges that we have is figuring out ways to better collect the data on students once they get beyond our high school doors. We need to do a better job of figuring that piece out. But I do know that our lead trainers have students that have come back to them that have come into their buildings, become educators. And I know a few of them have been there now for five or six years, which in a world of education, five or six years now seems to be longer than



the average for most educators to stay in the classroom. But we need to do a better job at looking at those successes and tracking those students.

NICOLLE ADAIR: Within our program, when it was initially started with Monica Naylor, prior to it going away, many of those within that Teacher Cadet program,—those teachers were educated here locally, and then came back. And they still worked within our district because I make sure that I put them in front of my students now all of the time. So there are two principals that I know of, and four teachers I know that stayed here.

For example, my first cohort is, they are second semester sophomores now. What I can tell you is because they interned during the summer school months, and then they do student teaching, and classroom observations, and then they also still work in the district sometimes part time within the school year if their schedule allows for it and if they're doing okay. They have to request to do that. Their second year as sophomores, if they're academically standing on their own two feet, we make recommendations for them.

But they are so comfortable and confident when they have to do their teacher observations and they have to teach lesson plans within their curriculum and when they're in college, that by the time—my hope and what I think is, by the time they graduate, that it'll come kind of really easy to them. So that's what I know for sure. We're too early in our program because my first cohort is only second semester sophomores.

DOUGLAS VAN DINE: Wonderful. And I know we're getting close to our time here, so I'll turn it back over to Doug.

DOUGLAS GAGNON: Thanks—so first of all, just thank you to everyone that attended. We had, at one point, 117 folks online, so that's just a fantastic audience to have here. And, of course, a special thanks to our three presenters. I sure learned a lot, and I hope folks on the phone did as well. So, again, huge thanks to everyone involved. So that's all we have, and best to everyone, and thank you again for attending.