Grow Your Own Program, From State Education Agency to School District to Student Outcomes

IES Institute of Education Sciences

Welcome, event orientation, and speaker introductions

Dr. Elizabeth Barkowski, Senior Researcher, American Institutes for Research

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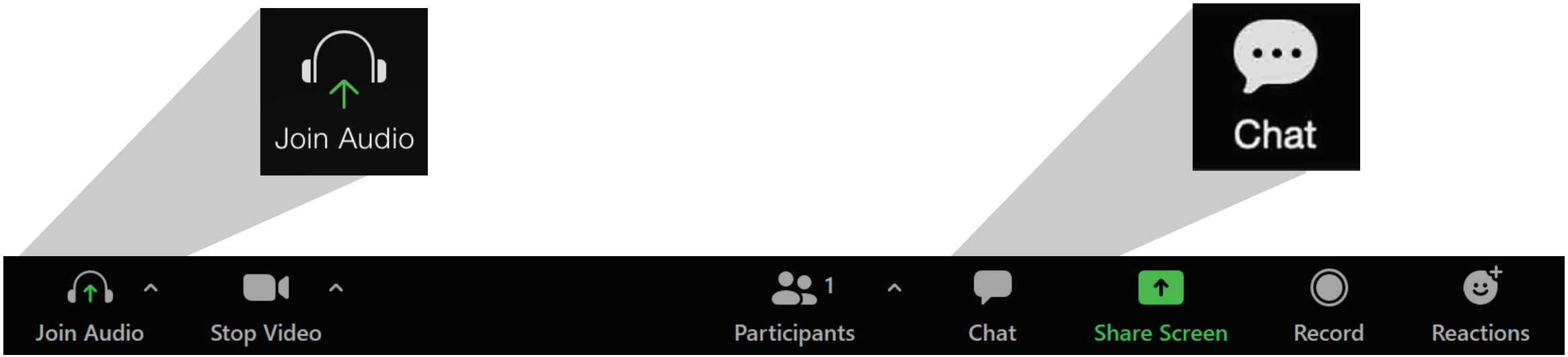
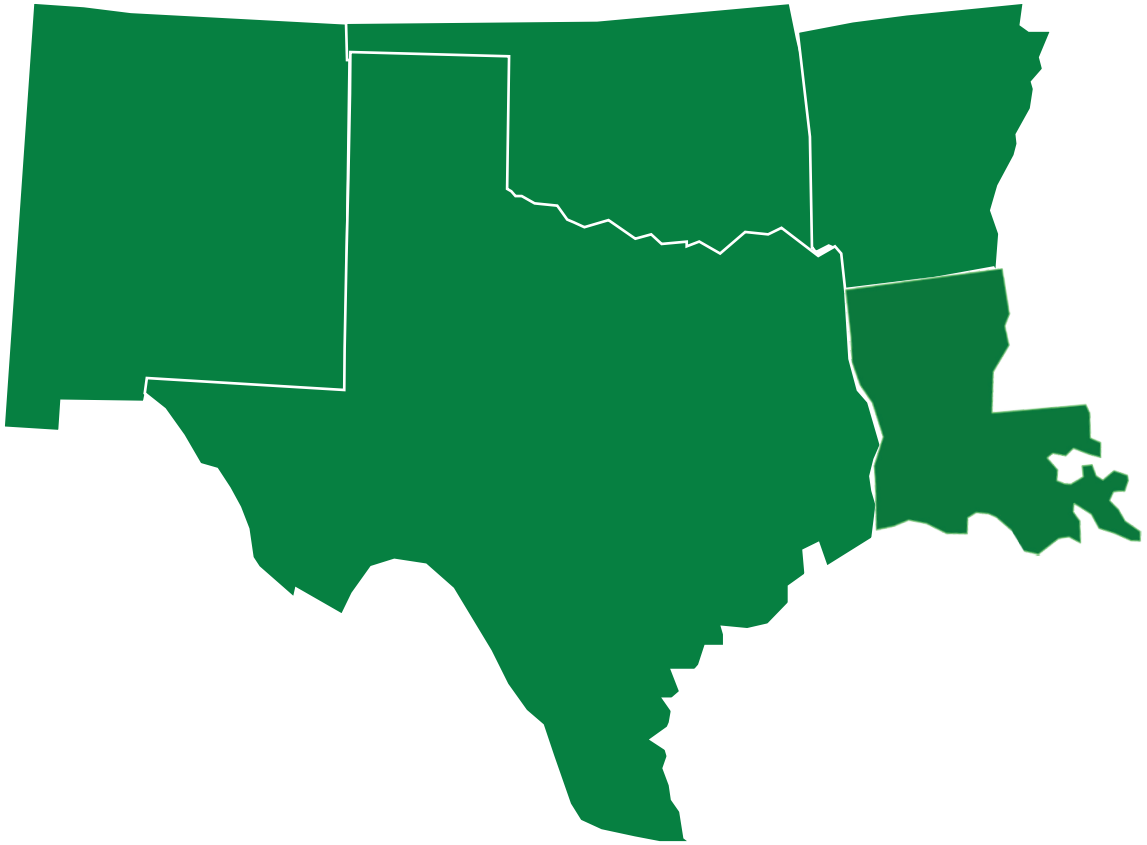


How does REL Southwest do this work?

REL Southwest works with state education agencies, districts, and other stakeholders to develop and apply research evidence to meaningfully improve student outcomes.

REL Southwest supports six collaborative research partnerships to address the regional needs, priorities, and interests of five states: Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas.



Webinar outcomes

- Learn about Grow Your Own Programs, including Texas Education Agency's (TEA's) GYO grant program.
- Understand how REL Southwest and the Region 14 Comprehensive Center support the TEA with its GYO grant program.
- Learn how different localities approach, implement, and support their GYO programs.

Meet the presenters

Ronald Coleman

Educator Recruitment & Development Specialist,
Texas Education Agency

Darcy Pietryka

Senior Study Director
Westat

Lisa Lachlan

Principal Researcher
AIR

Meet the presenters

Shawn Mason

Former Superintendent of Crosbyton CISD;
Rural School Liaison
Texas Tech University/West Texas Rural Education Partnership

Lisa Steele

Director of Talent Acquisition and Development, Goose Creek CISD

Jade Cox

CTE Specialist for Public Services, Goose Creek CISD

Jesse Gray

Strategic Partnerships Coordinator and Grow Your Own Programs Manager, Hamilton County Schools

Overview of GYO programs

Dr. Elizabeth Barkowski

What are GYO programs?

GYO programs aim to recruit teachers from within communities, and from within populations that may be well suited to the teaching profession, in order to meet teacher workforce needs.

GYO programs typically aim to recruit individuals from the following groups into the teaching profession:

- High school students.
- Career changers.
- Paraprofessionals.

But what exactly is GYO?

Defining Grow Your Own (GYO)

GYO is a localized approach to developing a pipeline of educator candidates to meet local workforce needs (Cushing, 2019).

GYO programs are distinguished from other pipelines by *whom* they target and *how* (OSEP, 2021).

- GYO programs can focus on specific workforce needs (that is, school-level shortages, subject-level shortages, increasing educator diversity, etc.; Cushing, 2019).

GYO often leverages close partnerships to reduce obstacles that have historically kept candidates from entering the profession.

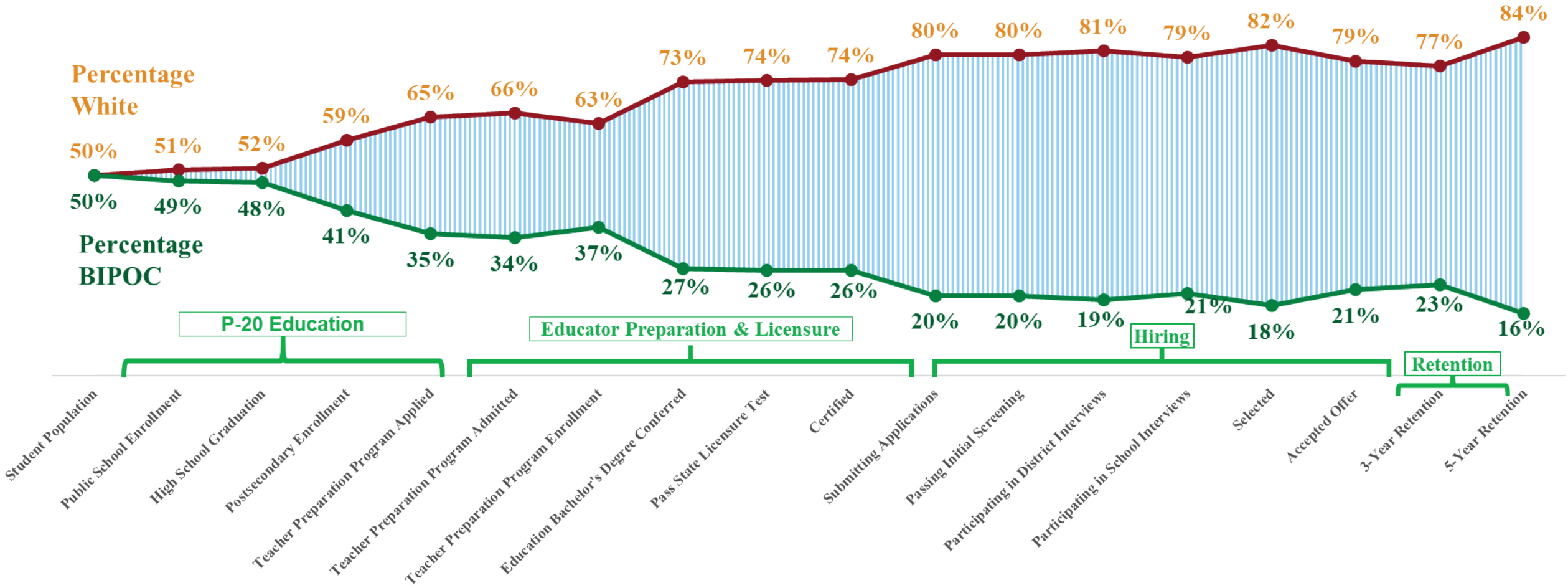
- Often includes partnerships between local education agencies, educator preparation programs (both traditional and alternative), state education agencies, teacher unions, and more.

Why GYO?

- The declining rate of teacher recruitment has been described as
  - the "biggest threat" to public schools in Texas, and
  - a challenge that rural schools may experience more intensely than schools in suburban or urban settings.
- Educator shortages have intensified since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- A diverse workforce is associated with closing student achievement and opportunity gaps, as well as improvements in academic outcomes on standardized tests, attendance, graduation rates, and college entrance rates for students of color.
- Having teachers with different racial or ethnic backgrounds from themselves may discourage students of color from joining the teaching profession.

Source: Aragon, 2016; Dellinger, 2021; Goings & Bianco, 2016; Player, 2015; Skinner et al., 2011; Valenzuela, 2016; Villegas & Davis, 2008; Villegas & Irvine, 2010

Educator shortages and educator diversity



Source: Center on Great Teachers and Leaders Talent Development Data Tool 2.0.

Primary elements of a GYO program

Research has found that several primary elements contribute to the success of a GYO program, including:

- Partnerships with school districts, teacher preparation programs, funders, and others.
- Targeted candidate selection/recruitment efforts.
- Curriculum and clinical experience placements.
- Sustainable funding models.

Source: Association for Career and Technical Education et al., 2009; Cushing, 2019; Texas Comprehensive Center, 2018; Zascavage et al., 2008.

GYO as a solution

Challenge	Potential Solution
Shortage of educators All 50 states and the District of Columbia have reported a critical shortage of educators. A national shortage of more than 110,000 teachers was determined in the 2019/20 school year, and it continues to grow exponentially.	Some research has found that for well-executed GYO programs, graduates from the program remained in teaching longer than the typical beginning teacher and taught in urban and rural schools at a high rate (Clewell & Villegas, 2001; Cushing, 2019; OSEP, 2021).
Shortage in critical subject areas Subject areas such as special education, STEM, career and technical education (CTE), and more are experiencing shortages at a disproportionate rate.	Evidence finds strong connections between GYO programs and effectively addressing shortages in high-need areas and subjects, such as in rural schools and in special education (Jessen et al., 2020; PESB, 2016).

GYO as a solution, cont.

Challenge	Potential Solution
Shortage of diverse teachers The national demographics of the teacher workforce are not representative of the student demographics.	In many states, GYO programs have had more success in recruiting and retaining a larger proportion of personnel of color than their traditional counterparts (Carver-Thomas, 2018; Muniz, 2018).
Hard-to-staff contexts Teachers work close to where they attended high school, which can make it difficult for districts with lower college matriculation to attract teachers.	Research has proven that GYO programs are especially successful in rural districts, which historically have struggled to recruit teachers from outside their communities (Carver-Thomas, 2018; Texas Comprehensive Center, 2018).