

# LESC HEARING BRIEF

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

**AGENCY:** Educators Rising,  
New Mexico State University  
(NMSU)

**DATE:** July 13, 2016

**PURPOSE OF HEARING:**  
**Educators Rising: efforts to  
increase the teacher pipeline in  
New Mexico**

**WITNESS:**  
**Dr. Karen Trujillo, Director, K-12  
Outreach, NMSU**

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**EXPECTED OUTCOME:**  
**Improved understanding of a  
particular way to address the  
teacher shortage dilemma the  
state is facing through strategies  
aimed at improving teacher  
pipeline issues**

According to research from the National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality, grow-your-own programs recruit local students who are well acquainted with the needs and challenges of their neighborhood or region, represent cultural and racial groups that exist within a school district, and who are already committed to the area.

In 2015, an Arizona Department of Education report on educator recruitment and retention listed developing high school programs such as Future Educators, now rebranded as Educators Rising, to encourage students to evaluate the field of education as they review their options for postsecondary studies as one of its top recommendations.

Recruitment and retention of high quality teachers remains an ongoing challenge for most states and local education agencies throughout the nation. According to the U.S. Department of Education Office of Postsecondary Education, the number of candidates entering teacher preparation programs is declining. During the 2009-2010 school year, the total enrollment of students in traditional and alternative teacher preparation programs in the U.S. was 725,518, and the most recent data for the 2012-2013 school year indicates that only 499,800 students were enrolled in teacher preparation programs.

It is likely a growing number of new teachers will be needed in New Mexico over the coming years due to a modestly growing student population, increasing number of retiring educators, and high teacher turnover. As teacher shortage needs become more apparent, the state will need new strategies to improve both the supply and quality of new teachers.

Research shows that most teachers accept jobs close to where they grew up and close to where they received their teacher training. Schools and school districts have a strong interest in both the supply and the quality of candidates prepared by local programs. In addition, schools and school districts also have firsthand knowledge of the skills, experience, and mindsets that prospective teachers need to be successful when they enter the classroom.

Recruitment efforts for grow-your-own programs should start as early as high school or middle school because research indicates that students who aspire to teach while in high school become teachers at higher rates than student who did not express teaching aspirations.

This brief identifies current national and state examples of grow-your-own programs and highlights New Mexico's Educators Rising program, which seeks to cultivate high skilled educators by guiding young people on a path to becoming accomplished teachers, beginning in high school and extending through college and into the profession.

### National and State Examples of Grow-Your-Own Programs.

Researchers from the Personnel Improvement Center, a national center who is focused on improving recruitment and retention of qualified personnel for children with disabilities, concluded in a 2012 report that an effective way to address the chronic shortage of teachers is to identify, recruit, train, and support individuals from the local area. Their report highlighted grow-your-own programs in Arizona and South Carolina.

To have a successful grow-your-own program, the following indicators are shown to be successful: providing leadership at the state, school district, and higher education instruction levels; developing program infrastructure that clearly articulates the roles and responsibilities of collaborative partners; establishing personal relationships with local

Based on a research study from Stanford University, over 60 percent of teachers work within 20 miles of where they went to high school, thus making teacher recruitment a local issue for communities.

During the 2015 legislative session, Senate Bill 443 was introduced to create the Teacher Career Academy Act, which aimed to increase the number of high-achieving students who enter the teaching profession by recruiting students in sixth through 12<sup>th</sup> grade and provide them with information about career opportunities in teaching and the availability of financial assistance for teacher preparation.

Under the federal Every Student Succeeds Act, school districts are able to enter into partnerships with institutions of higher education to implement any of the local uses of Title II funds, including developing and implementing initiatives to assist in recruiting, hiring, and retaining effective teachers.

education and human resource directors; involving universities and community colleges in all stages of the development and implementation of grow-your-own programs; securing school district support for grow your own program participants, in the form of mentoring, release time, and funding for textbooks and laptops; and tracking and disseminating program outcome data.

*Educators Rising Arizona.* Educators Rising Arizona provides high school students with the opportunities to take what they learn in their classes and apply these lessons in relevant, scenario-based competitions at the annual state leadership conference. In addition, Educators Rising Arizona offers opportunities for professional development for high school students who aspire to enter education by providing them with engaging breakout sessions on best teaching practices and leadership development. According to Learning First's September 2015 article, *Educators Rising Starts Early on Teacher Recruitment*, the Arizona Department of Education assigned a full-time program specialist to oversee Educators Rising Arizona. Through the success of the program specialist, there was a 55 percent increase in participation of students in Educators Rising Arizona, which includes approximately 1,400 students across the state.

*South Carolina Teacher Cadets.* The Teacher Cadet Program is operated by South Carolina's Center for Educator Recruitment, Retention, and Advancement, which has a mission to provide collaborative leadership in the recruitment, retention, and advancement of outstanding educators for all children in the state. The primary goal of the program is to encourage academically talented and high-achieving high school students with exemplary interpersonal and leadership skills to consider teaching as a career. A secondary goal of the program is to develop future community leaders who will become civic advocates for public education.

The program uses an innovative approach to attract young people to the teaching profession through a challenging introduction to teaching. The program seeks to provide high school students with insight into the nature of teaching, the problems of schooling, and the critical issues affecting quality of education in the nation's schools. Originally, the program was piloted in four South Carolina high schools during the 1985-1986 school year and has grown to include 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 program in its 30 year history.

The Arizona and South Carolina grow-your-own programs create a pipeline of teachers who are more likely to stay long term in low income communities, thus saving school districts money and creating stability for students. Additionally, the programs bring teachers into schools who know the history, culture, and language of the community, and who can understand the needs and issues of students and families from the community.

At the national level, Educators Rising supports cocurricular high school programs. There are a number of flexible programs, including a stand-alone elective course or a career and technical education pathway. Educators Rising aims to amplify and extend these programs' impact so that high school students can be equipped to succeed in educator preparation programs.

Educators Rising New Mexico aspires to increase enrollment in colleges of education throughout the state and to provide New Mexico with skilled teachers who stay in their communities to teach.

**Educators Rising.** On a national level, Educators Rising is a nationwide network of secondary based, grow-your-own teacher pathway programs, offering impact-seeking young students a chance to try out teaching. Currently, Educators Rising has 14,500 participants in 800 schools across the country. Depending on the school, school district, or state's needs, there are several program models that seek to meet the goals of the local community and increase diversity in the teaching workforce.

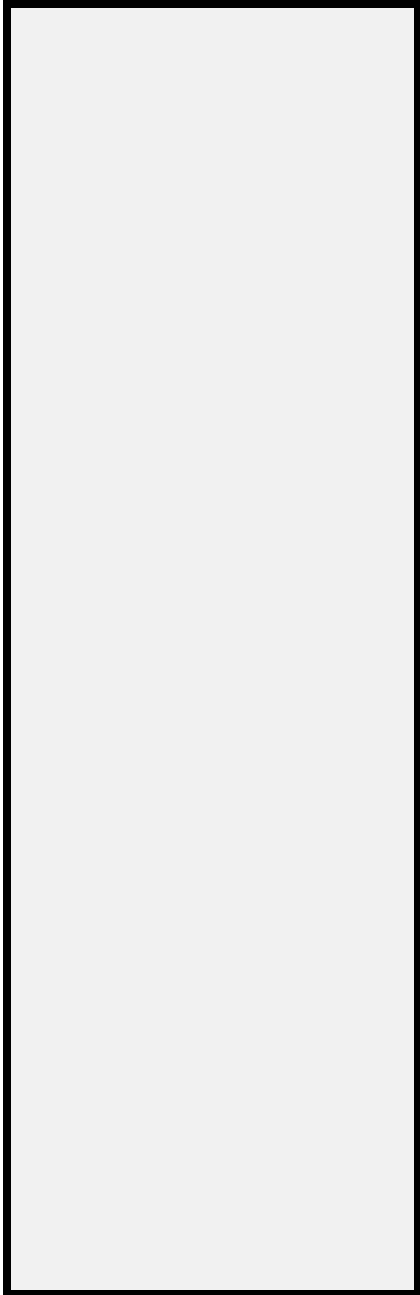
Successful Educators Rising programs across the country include: Boston University partnering with Educators Rising to support the creation of elective courses in three Boston-area high schools for the 2015-2016 school year which will support the high school students; and the Teacher Academy of Maryland program, a partnership between the Maryland State Department of Education and Towson University, which provides curriculum and professional development for teacher leaders to deliver a four semester pathway program to high school students that includes a clinical internship, opportunities for dual credit, and scholarships.

**Educators Rising New Mexico.** Formerly known as Future Educators of America, Educators Rising New Mexico was reestablished in August 2015. The program is a nationally recognized career technical student organization that prepares high school students to become teachers.

Over the course of its first year, Educators Rising New Mexico has established 30 chapters of its organization in the state and created partnerships with the Public Education Department and the Higher Education Department. Additionally, it organized and hosted a three-day state conference at New Mexico State University (NMSU) in February 2016. Approximately 100 high school students from the school districts in Aztec, Questa, Pecos, Magdalena, Española, Santa Fe, Albuquerque, Carlsbad, Gadsden, Bernalillo, Deming, and Las Cruces participated in the conference. Students competed in 11 competitions, including children's literature and lesson planning, during the event. Students who placed in the top five of each category qualified to attend the national Educators Rising conference. Moreover, representatives from the University of New Mexico, NMSU, Western New Mexico University, and Eastern New Mexico University also attended the conference to answer any questions about their programs.

The goals of the program in the next five years include: establishing 100 New Mexico chapters by 2020; providing opportunities for students to develop 21<sup>st</sup> century skills by attending conferences, participating in internships, and taking dual credit courses; and offering scholarships to students who will pursue degrees in education at a New Mexico college or university and who will become teachers in the state upon graduation.

***Conclusion.*** Recruitment of teachers is one element of addressing the state's teacher shortages. However, recruitment initiatives should be



implemented as part of a broader, holistic recruitment and retention strategy, rather than as standalone initiatives, to be an effective strategy. To create and implement an effective recruitment strategy, research suggests that schools must match their recruitment and retention efforts to the characteristics and motivations of the teachers and teaching candidates they hope to attract. For example, schools could recruit and retain more high-quality teachers if school leaders promoted good working conditions, including an atmosphere of collegial support, meaningful involvement in decision making, and a focus on student learning.

Thus, research shows states should invest in the professional working conditions and supports for teacher learning that are critical to their success. To retain teachers through best practices, evidence suggests teachers are attracted primarily to principals who are good instructional leaders, to like-minded colleagues who are committed to the same goals, to teaching conditions and readily available, relevant instructional materials, and to learning supports that enable them to be effective. If the best teachers are retained in New Mexico, then regardless of income level or ethnicity, all students will benefit.

### **QUESTIONS**

Are programs that seek to recruit middle school, high school, or community college students into teaching effective in increasing the number of students who enter teaching or the subsequent success of these teachers and their rate of retention in the profession?

What needs to be done to recruit potential prospective students into Educators Rising New Mexico?

What are the top two or three goals of Educators Rising New Mexico for the year, both in the program and at the school district level?

What will make Educators Rising New Mexico successful and how will that success be measured?

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