



Transforming Education and Addressing Critical Hiring through Educators Rising (TEACHER) Act

Draft Legislation from PDK International



January 2024

www.pdkintl.org
www.educatorsrising.org

Note

This template is provided to support those interested in supporting a Grow Your Own (GYO) program in your community. PDK International's Educators Rising is an example of a GYO program that combines a site-based chapter model alongside a standards-based curriculum. Students in Educators Rising chapters are eligible to participate in regional, state, and national events.

[STATE NAME] Transforming Education and Addressing Critical Hiring through Educators Rising (TEACHER) Act

SECTION 1: TITLE

This legislation shall be known as the [State Name] Transforming Education and Addressing Critical Hiring through Educators Rising (TEACHER) Act.

SECTION 2: BACKGROUND

(a) The United States is facing an unprecedented teacher shortage crisis, with a significant impact on the quality of education and the academic achievement of students.¹

(b) According to national data, a growing number of schools, particularly those in historically underserved communities, are grappling with the challenge of recruiting and retaining qualified educators. The resulting teacher shortage is exacerbated by factors such as retirements, attrition, and a declining number of individuals pursuing careers in education.

(c) The shortage is not uniform across the nation but disproportionately affects schools serving primarily students from low-income backgrounds, students of color, and students experiencing homelessness. These disparities contribute to educational inequities and may limit the opportunities and outcomes for students in these communities.

(d) Recognizing the urgency to address this crisis, numerous states have explored innovative solutions, including the establishment of Grow Your Own (GYO) teacher preparation programs and in particular, Educators Rising. Educators Rising, and other qualified teacher preparation programs, aim to cultivate local talent, empower communities, and enhance diversity and representation within the teaching profession.

(e) This legislation seeks to build upon successful GYO models by providing comprehensive support, addressing the specific needs of schools receiving Title I funding, or primarily serving students qualifying for Title I funding, students of color, and students experiencing homelessness.

SECTION 3: PURPOSE

The purpose of this Act is to bolster and support existing Grow Your Own (GYO) teacher preparation programs in [State Name], in particular Educators Rising, which promotes community-centered initiatives, prioritizes traditionally underserved students, and enhances support through pre-service accreditation, college and career pathway programs, dual enrollment courses, stipends for

¹ See more about Educators Rising's impacts on students, teachers, and communities: pdkintl.org/whitepapers-edrising

educators, improved data collection and accountability, and provides incentives for new educators to pursue careers in particular geographies and subject areas.

SECTION 4: SUPPORT FOR GROW YOUR OWN TEACHER PREPARATION PROGRAMS

(a) Recognition and Collaboration:

(i) The [State Department of Education] shall formally recognize Educators Rising as a state CTSO (Career and Technical Student Organization), which will spur innovation in state-wide CTSOs, and collaborate with other existing, qualified GYO Teacher Preparation Programs across the state.

²(ii) Collaborative efforts shall aim to strengthen the capabilities of existing programs, with an emphasis on community engagement and equity.

(b) Resources:

(i) The [State Department of Education] shall provide staff support, technical assistance, and resources to support the growth and sustainability of GYO programs, including Educators Rising, and to better understand their impact across communities, cities, and the state.

(ii) This assistance should include curriculum development, mentorship programs, financial support, CTSO support, and outreach initiatives to expand program reach within underserved communities, with particular attention to schools receiving Title I funding or serving primarily students qualifying for Title I funding, students of color, and students experiencing homelessness, and for teachers specializing in Special Education, English Language Learning, and Mathematics.

(iii) Funding shall be used for program enhancement, stipends, dual enrollment course expansion, and the improvement of the data collection and tracking systems within existing GYO programs, with a focus on schools receiving Title I funding, or serving primarily students qualifying for Title I funding, students of color, and students experiencing homelessness.

(iv) Stipends shall be provided based on financial need and the commitment of participants to serve in high-need schools upon program completion, with a focus on schools receiving Title I funding, or serving primarily students qualifying for Title I funding, students of color, and students experiencing homelessness.

(c) Pre-Service Accreditation Enhancement:

(i) Existing GYO programs, including Educators Rising, shall work collaboratively with the [State Board of Education] to enhance and expand pre-service accreditation processes, ensuring alignment with state teaching standards.

(ii) The accreditation shall maintain a balance between academic coursework and practical classroom experience, promoting comprehensive teacher preparation through clinical experiences and beginning in secondary school coursework.

(d) Dual Enrollment Courses Expansion:

(i) Existing GYO programs, including Educators Rising, may partner with local institutions of higher education (IHEs) and local education agencies (LEAs) to expand dual enrollment course offerings.

² No longer required to receive federal Perkins funding.

Completion of coursework will result in enrolled students gaining credits toward an Associate or Bachelor's degree in an education-related degree, and may result in guaranteed admission in the partnering IHE. Partnering IHEs may also establish collegiate GYO programs.

(ii) Expansion should prioritize providing participants with opportunities to earn college credits while gaining practical experience in local schools, particularly those serving students qualifying for Title I funding or serving primarily students qualifying for Title I funding, students of color, and students experiencing homelessness, and for teachers specializing in Special Education, English Language Learning, and Mathematics.

SECTION 5: STANDARDS FOR GROW YOUR OWN PROGRAMS

(a) The [State Department of Education] shall establish and maintain standards for Grow Your Own Teacher Preparation Programs aligned with optimal industry standards to ensure consistency, quality, and effectiveness (see [Interstate Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium](#) or [National Board for Professional Teaching Standards](#)).

(b) Standards shall include, but not be limited to, the following:

(i) Community Engagement: Programs must demonstrate active collaboration with local communities, including parents, community leaders, and stakeholders, to address specific educational needs.

(ii) Mentorship and Support: Programs should provide mentorship and ongoing support for participants, including guidance from experienced educators, to enhance professional development.

(iii) Alignment with State Teaching Standards: Pre-service accreditation processes within GYO programs must align with state teaching standards to ensure that participants are well-prepared for the teaching profession.

(iv) Specialized Training for Critical Areas: Programs may include specialized training for educators in critical areas such as Special Education, English Language Learning, and Mathematics.

(v) Access: GYO programs should prioritize access to traditionally underserved students, actively recruiting participants from populations underrepresented in the teaching profession and underserved communities, including those from schools receiving Title I funding, or serving primarily students qualifying for Title I funding, students of color, and students experiencing homelessness and for teachers specializing in Special Education, English Language Learning, and Mathematics.

(c) The [State Department of Education] shall periodically review and update these standards in consultation with educators, community representatives, and education experts to ensure their continued relevance and effectiveness.

SECTION 6: ENHANCED DATA COLLECTION AND TRACKING SYSTEM

(a) Existing GYO programs shall work collaboratively with the [State Department of Education] to establish and enhance a comprehensive data collection and tracking system.

(b) The [State Department of Education] shall establish staff roles designed to track student participation and attrition, and to provide technical assistance to ensure the secure and effective implementation of the enhanced data collection system.

(c) A dedicated funding stream shall be established to support the enhancement of existing GYO programs and the improvement of the data collection and tracking system.

(d) The [State Department of Education] shall allocate funds to monitor and track participants from enrollment in existing GYO programs through their transition to becoming teachers of record.

(e) Data collected could include, but not be limited to:

- Demographic information of participants.
- Higher education enrollment details.
- Certification types pursued.
- Timelines for participants becoming teachers of record.

(f) Regular reports on the program's effectiveness, including detailed participant outcomes, shall be provided to the [State Legislature] and made publicly available.

SECTION 7: ACCESS FOR UNDERSERVED AND UNDERREPRESENTED POPULATIONS

(a) Schools receiving Title I funding, or primarily serving students qualifying for Title I funding, students of color, and students experiencing homelessness, that actively participate in and support the GYO program, shall receive additional incentives, such as priority access to additional resources, professional development opportunities, and collaboration grants.

(b) The [State Department of Education] shall establish guidelines and criteria for determining the level of incentives based on the level of participation and support provided by eligible schools.

SECTION 8: REPORTING AND EVALUATION

(a) The [State Department of Education] shall submit an annual report to the [State Legislature] on the progress and impact of existing GYO programs, including detailed information on participant outcomes and the effectiveness of the enhanced data collection system.

(b) An independent evaluation shall be conducted every three years to assess the effectiveness of existing GYO programs in addressing the teacher shortage, promoting equity, and tracking participant success.

SECTION 9: EFFECTIVE DATE

This act shall take effect on [date].

SECTION 10: APPROPRIATIONS

This act shall include funding amounting to no less than \$10,000 per participating high school, to be spent on purchasing GYO curriculum, staff stipends, travel and competition fees.

(a) Funding Allocation:

(i) An appropriation of [\$X,XXX,XXX] is hereby allocated for the establishment and implementation of GYO teacher preparation programs, including Educators Rising.

(ii) Each LEA shall receive funding to distribute to participating high schools in the amount of [\$10,000] to be utilized for the following purposes:

- Competition Funds: to support educational competitions and events that promote teacher development and excellence.
- Incentives for Educator Participation: as incentives to encourage active participation of educators in the program.

(iii) The funds provided to each high school by the LEA shall be disbursed annually, with appropriate reporting requirements to ensure transparency and accountability.

(b) Program Guidelines:

(i) Eligibility: High schools within the state are eligible to participate in the program upon meeting certain criteria laid out in the authorization language above.

(ii) Program Administration: The [Specify Department or Agency] shall oversee the administration and implementation of the TEACHER Act funding.

(iii) Reporting Requirements: Participating high schools shall submit annual reports detailing the utilization of funds, program outcomes, and the number of students involved to LEAs and to the SEA.

(c) Implementation Timeline:

The TEACHER Act shall be launched in the academic year [Specify Year], with annual reviews and adjustments as necessary.

(d) Evaluation and Impact Assessment:

The [Specify Department or Agency] shall conduct regular evaluations of the program's effectiveness in addressing teacher shortages and improving the quality of educators in the state. Results of these evaluations shall be made public and used to inform future policy decisions.

(e) Sunset Provision:

This appropriation shall be subject to review and reauthorization every ten years, allowing for adjustments based on evolving educational needs and priorities.

(f) Funding Source:

The funds allocated for this program shall be drawn from [Specify Funding Source], in accordance with the state budgetary procedures.

(g) Severability:

If any provision of this appropriation is found to be unconstitutional or invalid, the remaining provisions shall remain in full force and effect.



EDUCATORS RISING



PDK International
PO Box 13090
Arlington, Virginia 22219
(800) 766-1156

educatorsrising.org
pdkintl.org