



The Efficacy of Educators Rising as a Grow Your Own Solution

New Research from PDK International



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Introduction and Background

[Educators Rising is a national program that identifies, educates, and supports middle and high school students who are interested in pursuing careers in P-12 education](#), particularly in their own communities, by providing opportunities for middle and high school students to engage in professional development activities related to education. The Educators Rising programmatic “Grow Your Own” (GYO) model **bridges the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application**, equipping participating students with the skills and confidence needed to manage classrooms effectively from the outset of their careers.

Over 60 percent of K-12 teachers across America work within 20 miles of where they attended high school, and teachers who attended high school in very urban communities are even more likely to remain in their communities after graduation, moving a median distance of **4 miles compared to 9 miles** for other college graduates (Reininger, 2012). The Educators Rising model embodies a strategic investment in solving local teacher shortages by fostering a vibrant culture of teaching excellence that comes from and is representative of the local community. By recruiting candidates from within the community, these programs help to create a teaching staff that more accurately reflects the demographics of the student body (Deussen et al., 2017). Representation matters significantly; students of color benefit from having teachers who share similar backgrounds and experiences, which can enhance student-teacher relationships, improve academic outcomes, and foster improved school climates (Skinner, 2010).

Program efficacy

Based on initial findings across four recently collected datasets, **Educators Rising likely is advancing participants' career readiness and contributing to professional excitement and interest**. These data reflect 1) the program’s impact on students who participated in Educators Rising programming and the national conference in 2024, 2) state-specific findings from educators who deliver and lead in Educators Rising programming in local schools and districts, 3) state-specific findings on students participating in Educators Rising chapters and curriculum, and 4) qualitative interviews with Educators Rising partners, including local education agencies and institutions of higher education. Further research and collaboration among educational stakeholders are essential to refine and scale these programs, ensuring their effectiveness in diverse educational contexts.

Prepared to Join the Profession from Day One

The Educators Rising program demonstrates effectiveness in supporting future teachers in developing as educators and preparing to join the teacher workforce. In one state-specific survey of students participating in Educators Rising programming administered by the state education agency (SEA), **98 percent of students believed that Educators Rising programming had helped them better understand the teaching profession.** Specifically, **99 percent cited the programming as increasing their understanding of student development. 93 percent displayed understanding of effective instructional strategies to engage students and promote learning, and 92 percent identified relevant skills learned through Educators Rising programming which prepared them to become an accomplished teacher.** Research indicates that immersive experiences like Educators Rising are particularly beneficial in high-need schools where novice teachers may otherwise struggle with classroom management and instructional challenges (Chu & Weems, 2023). These findings align with initial qualitative findings, which suggest that Educators Rising 1) encourages, supports, and trains future educators through curriculum and student groups, and 2) may help to address community-specific needs.

Teachers involved in Educators Rising expressed satisfaction with the programming, noting improvements in classroom dynamics and an increased sense of collaboration among students.

From CTE to the Workforce

Early findings suggest that Educators Rising is increasing the number of teachers in the workforce. Students who participated in any career and technical education (CTE) courses in high school are more likely to be employed after high school, compared to similar classmates who did not participate in CTE in high school (Lindsay et al., 2024). The integration of CTE courses within the Educators Rising framework provides students with **practical, hands-on experience in educational settings, bridging the gap between theoretical knowledge and real-world application.** Furthermore, when compared to learners in other CTE programs, programs like Educators Rising, which include team teaching, learner support services, and career pathways, have higher rates of initial and additional credential attainment (Lindsay et al.). Longitudinal studies have shown that individuals who participate in CTE programs are more likely to achieve higher employment rates and greater job stability over time compared to their peers without such training (Heckman & Kautz, 2012). Specifically within the education sector, CTE pathways for future educators have been associated with higher retention rates and a more diverse teaching workforce, which addresses long-term shortages in critical areas like STEM and special education (Watson et al., 2019). Additionally, graduates of CTE programs often bring

enhanced practical skills and innovative teaching methods to their roles, contributing to improved educational outcomes and school performance over the years (Anderson & Smith, 2021). Importantly, student participation in these kinds of programs is becoming more common—the number of baccalaureate degrees and certificates that postsecondary institutions have granted to students who participated in education CTE programs at the secondary level increased by **77 percent in the last 10 years**. (American Action Forum, 2021). Based on a small statewide sample in Ohio, within four years of completion of Educators Rising, **at least 12 percent of students entered the teaching profession**. This rate is similar to other CTE programs where students must complete further certifications or earn a baccalaureate degree after high school to enter the workforce. Conference data from Educators Rising indicates that **80 percent of participating students plan to pursue a career in education**, and over **50 percent indicated an intention to pursue a degree that can readily lead to certification upon graduation**, including both subject-area and education degrees.

As Educators Rising prioritizes the recruitment and retention of local residents who are already embedded in their communities, it may assist in fostering a deeper connection and commitment to the students and families they serve. This intrinsic community alignment enhances cultural competence and responsiveness, crucial for addressing the unique educational needs and socio-cultural contexts of these communities (Del Hierro, 2022). By leveraging existing community ties, this program mitigates the often transient nature of the teaching workforce, leading to greater stability and continuity in the educational environment.

Educators Rising encourages, supports, and trains future educators through curriculum and student groups, and may help to address community-specific needs.

Certification Ready

PRAXIS exams are designed to measure the academic skills and subject-specific content knowledge necessary for quality educators. Many teacher preparation programs and state licensing boards require candidates to pass one or more PRAXIS exams to demonstrate they are ready to become certified or licensed teachers. A small national sampling of Educators Rising students who took PRAXIS exams in 2024 indicate encouraging directional findings regarding the program's role in preparing future educators to serve in diverse communities across the country. Students involved in Educators Rising programming scored approximately **14 points higher, on average, than students who were not**. Across identities, when disaggregated by subgroup, Educators Rising students performed better than their peers who did not participate in programming. **Average scores for Black students who participated in Educator Rising**

programming were 8 points higher than the national average; **average scores for Hispanic students were over 10 points higher** than the national average.

Teacher Beliefs About Student Readiness

According to state-specific data collected by the SEA, across 17 districts **82 percent of teachers delivering the programming believe that Educators Rising programming has prepared students to enter the profession upon completion**; furthermore, **64 percent believe that their students have acquired strong teaching skills because of Educators Rising programming**. This aligns with qualitative data, which found that teachers involved in Educators Rising expressed satisfaction with the programming, noting improvements in classroom dynamics and an increased sense of collaboration among students. Teachers observed enhanced self-efficacy among participating students and a more positive learning environment within high school settings.

In a state-specific data set, teachers cited particular lessons, including those addressing the ability to implement culturally relevant pedagogy and to advocate for educational equity, as impactful and important learning opportunities for future educators. This programming is particularly critical in communities of color, where students frequently face disparities in resources and opportunities. Lessons in these topics position educators to support academic achievement and social-emotional development for all students (Gist et al., 2019).

Ninety-three percent of students displayed understanding of effective instructional strategies to engage students and promote learning.

Conclusion

Initial findings across these data indicate encouraging results for the teaching profession. Additional research should include more extensive quantitative analysis of participating students and efficacy of chapter programming as compared to curriculum programming.

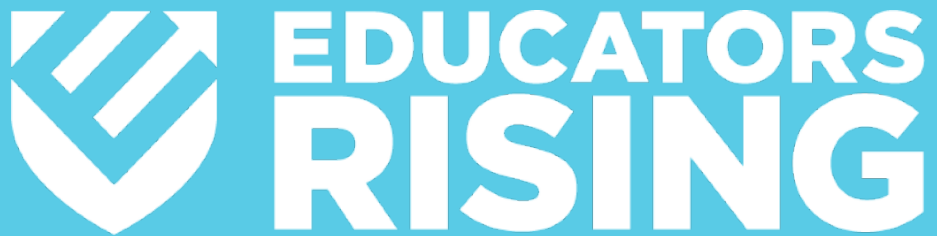
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