



Providing Access to and Supporting the Completion of Educator Preparation Programs

In order to diversify the educator workforce, more racially, ethnically, and linguistically diverse candidates need to successfully complete educator preparation programs. Educator preparation programs vary. Some are college or university programs while others are graduate school or residency programs. Still other programs are targeted to people with a bachelor's or an advanced degree looking to change fields.

The research identifies a variety of barriers to program completion for racially and ethnically diverse candidates: navigating the transition from high school to higher education, the financial burden of higher education, perception of the teaching profession as low-paying or low-status, and basic skills tests as a prerequisite for teaching programs (New America). Any potential solutions must be tailored to the needs of potential candidates and must work to address many of the barriers that racially, ethnically, and linguistically diverse candidates face.

Across our region, many states and communities are investing in grow-your-own programs and supports. These programs are sometimes focused around students—providing students access to the coursework, interests, exposure, and credentials necessary to enter preparation programs. Sometimes grow-your-own programs are targeted toward paraprofessionals and community members. Grow your own programs represent a powerful way to build a workforce that is more representative of the students it serves and a promising strategy for authentically engaging a community.

Promising Practices

- [Manchester School District](#): This New Hampshire district has established a partnership with Southern New Hampshire University to bring people in as paraprofessionals and get them on a track toward certification.
- Massachusetts [Journey into Education and Teaching](#) (JET): Helping Massachusetts paraprofessionals become teachers.
- Massachusetts [Paraprofessional Teach Preparation Grant Program](#): Provides financial assistance to paraprofessionals who want to become certified teachers.
- [The Coalition for Diverse Educators](#): A California-based organization that describes itself as “a community of leaders from teacher preparation programs, public schools, teacher pipeline nonprofit organizations, and higher education leaders dedicated to developing and recruiting teachers of color.”
- [Educators Rising](#): “As a Career and Technical Student Organization (CTSO), Educators Rising offers resources and opportunities that integrate directly into the academic programs of ‘teacher academy’ career and technical education courses at the high school level.”
- [Resources for Recruiting, Hiring and Retaining Teachers of Color](#): This compendium of resources developed by REL Northwest includes strategies for designing, implementing, and evaluating grow-your-own programs geared toward educators and secondary students.

Strategies to consider

The strategies listed here are applicable to all stakeholders. For role or system-specific recommendations, please turn to page 20.

1. Remove barriers to accessing Pell Grants for adult education enrollees to enable participation in education courses leading to certification.
2. Require teacher educators to participate in antiracist and anti-bias training.
3. Implement a micro-credential endorsement for culturally responsive teaching (either at the pre-service or inservice level).
4. Advocate for districts to cost share in exchange for service to help defray the high cost of becoming a certified paraprofessional, teacher, or administrator.
5. Require annual reporting on the percentage of faculty and students of color in educator preparation programs.
6. Require anti-bias training for all teacher mentors (supporting prospective educators), education faculty, sponsoring teachers, and coaches.
7. Conduct stakeholder surveys of anyone who works with educator preparation candidates to gauge how they are doing with respect to cultural competency.
8. Offer college students (in their first two years of study) paid experiences in K-12 schools to expose them to teaching.
9. Eliminate the cost of translating certificates from credentialed candidates that require translations.
10. Develop mentorship programs between college preparation programs and local districts.