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US Department of Education Highlights Educators Rising Grow-Your-Own Program

COVID-19 handbook cites use of educator pipeline programs as key strategy to promote educational equity after the pandemic

(WASHINGTON, D.C.) – The U.S. Department of Education has highlighted the work of the Educators Rising grow-your-own initiative in creating a diverse educator pipeline in its [COVID-19 Handbook, Volume 2: Roadmap to Reopening Safely and Meeting All Students' Needs](#) handbook released Friday.

Noting the barriers to teaching candidates of color to enter the education field, the Department commended states and programs that have prioritized educator diversity “through strategic, action-oriented goals or leadership committees.” The Department noted that Connecticut’s use of the Educators Rising program has allowed the state to “promote teaching and support high school and college students, especially students of color, in becoming educators.”

[Educators Rising](#) has chapters in all 50 states and partners with Connecticut in a state-wide initiative. In October, Connecticut expanded the [Educators Rising Academy curriculum to 10 school districts](#). The Educators Rising Academy Curriculum is a standards-based, teacher-approved path for instruction that emphasizes fundamental teaching practices for high school students to develop as they take their first steps on the path to becoming accomplished professionals.

“Educators Rising is proud to work with Connecticut and other states to address the teacher shortage and improve educator diversity in the state,” said Dr. Joshua P. Starr, Chief Executive Officer of PDK International. “We will continue to partner with states

across the country to work toward a stronger and more equitable workforce of educators.”

Promoting diversity is a major goal of Educators Rising: 52% of Educators Rising members are students of color, and our grow-your-own programs aim to create an educator pipeline that matches the diversity of your own community, by cultivating future educators from current students.

“Programs that engage students early and give them hands-on opportunities to learn about the teaching profession, such as “Grow Your Own” programs,” the Department wrote in the *COVID-19 Handbook*, “might be particularly effective in recruiting educators who reflect the diversity and specific needs of our most underserved students.”

Educators Rising firmly believes that building a strong foundation of aspiring teachers within a community will lead to a stronger and more diverse set of teachers in that area in the near future. Studies show that 61% of teachers teach within 20 miles of where they went to school.

In November, Educators Rising [hosted a webinar](#) about the program’s success in Connecticut. State leaders discussed how they were able to fund the program using their existing budget to create a state-wide initiative. Like many other states nationally, Connecticut suffers from a diversity gap in its educator workforce. While more than 45 percent of students in the state identified as people of color in 2019-2020, only 9.6 percent of educators came from minority backgrounds.

In its *COVID-19 Handbook*, the Department of Education pointed to grow-your-own programs as a path forward for more states to diversify their educator staffing. The Department noted that more than 50% of students nationally are students of color, but less than 20% of educators are educators of color.

About Educators Rising

[Educators Rising](#) is a community-based initiative, in which chapters at schools feed teacher preparation programs at institutes of higher education with the support of district leadership, State Departments of Education, and local philanthropists. These entities come together to provide pathways to grow and diversify the profession. More than 52% of Educators Rising members are students of color who will diversify the teacher pipeline and ensure every child has an effective teacher.

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