



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### Empowering Student Voices: Growing Your Own Educators from Within

ARLINGTON, Va., Nov. 7, 2023—The importance of student voice in education cannot be overstated. Students have unique perspectives on what is relevant and meaningful in their education, and they bring a broader understanding of real-world challenges and opportunities.

At the American Association for Employment in Education (AAEE) Conference in Chicago, Illinois on Oct. 25, current and former students of Educators Rising—one of the nation’s largest grow your own educator program—discussed how they are taking ownership of their learning journey and investing in their future and the future of their communities.

“Phi Delta Kappa and Educators Rising are committed to nurturing students’ voices and fostering the next generation of educators,” said James Lane, CEO of PDK International. “Student voice is not just about listening to what students have to say; it’s about recognizing the transformative power of their insights and actively involving them in shaping their career path.”

Presenting the AAEE session entitled "Student Voice Matters: How to Grow Your Own from Within," the current and alumni student panelists included:

- Jose Carillo, former Educators Rising National Officer and current teacher in Austin, Texas
- Maya Moneze, a high school senior from Aurora, Illinois, and current Educators Rising Illinois State President who is aiming to pursue a degree in Elementary and Special Education
- Milan Aranda, from Omaha, Nebraska, a freshman studying Elementary and Special Education at Northwest Missouri State University, former Nebraska Educators Rising State Officer and current Educators Rising National President.

Lisa D. Rollins, National Director of Outreach and Partnerships for PDK International/Educators Rising, facilitated the session.

The panelists provided perspectives on the challenges educators face during the certification and employment process and how Educators Rising has further prepared them for a career in education. They also discussed what initially inspired their pursuit of teaching and how Educators Rising competitions have fortified their teaching preparation.

"This event just solidified the need for student voice. Many human resource officials spoke of the need for more of these events where we can hear from Educators Rising students who have been positively impacted by what the program offers and the barriers they face during their journey to becoming a teacher," said Rollins. As Jose Carillo stated in his presentation, "It all started with Educators Rising."

“Through Educators Rising and events such as this, we aim to continue to address teacher shortages while inspiring future educators and seeking innovation and positive outcomes in the field of education,” said Lane.

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#### About PDK International

Established in 1906, PDK International supports P-20 educators, researchers, and policy makers by strengthening their commitment to the profession throughout the entire arc of their careers. We are committed to elevating the profession through the intersection of research and practice. Through our core values of social justice, engagement, excellence, and results, we encourage educators and stakeholders to elevate the discourse and change the narrative around teaching and learning to ensure that every student has a high-quality equitable education. [www.pdkintl.org](http://www.pdkintl.org)

#### About Educators Rising

In 2015, PDK International – in its 115-year commitment to the profession of education – launched Educators Rising, formerly the Future Educators Association (FEA). Today, Educators Rising is cultivating a new generation of highly skilled educators by guiding young people on a path from high school through college and into their teaching careers. By working with aspiring educators who reflect the demographics of their communities and who are passionate about serving those communities through public education, Educators Rising is changing the face of teaching. <https://educatorsrising.org/>

