



NEWS RELEASE

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Educators Rising Forges New Partnership with American Federation of Teachers to Support Districts Benefitting from a Grow Your Own Approach to the National Teacher Shortage

Orlando, Florida—June 27, 2025—PDK International (PDK) is proud today on site at the 2025 Educators Rising National Conference to announce a new partnership with the American Federation of Teachers (AFT). This partnership will honor both organizations’ long history of collaboration and current shared interest in recruiting and retaining a diverse, prepared, and professional educator workforce.

The details of this partnership include:

- AFT encouraging its affiliate organizations to use local, state, and federal grants to start or expand integration of Educators Rising chapters and programming within their districts;
- AFT endorsing the use of Educators Rising as the preferred Grow Your Own solution towards schools and districts establishing an education career and technical education (CTE) pathway;
- AFT providing annually consultation in the further development of the Educators Rising Curriculum; and
- PDK providing reduced pricing to AFT-affiliated districts for Educators Rising Curriculum; and
- PDK providing professional development content for AFT members.

“AFT was an instrumental partner in the creation of the Educators Rising Standards that form the foundation for our Educators Rising Curriculum, which powers many district’s education

career pathway programs. Today, our commitment toward public education and the cultivation of high quality teachers continues with this strategic partnership,” said **Albert Chen**, chief operating officer of PDK International, which runs the nation’s premier career and technical student organization to support high schoolers interested in future education careers, including teaching. “Educators Rising continues to be a movement amongst kids, not only to enter the teaching profession, but also to be a force for change as educators and educator leaders, paving the way to be a part of the community’s workforce, reflect its demographics and values, and allowing them to be the role models they may have never had. We are honored to join forces with AFT to create this partnership and are grateful for their support and commitment to education.”

AFT is one of the nation's largest professional employee organizations, committed to advancing the cause of public education. AFT's 1.8 million members work at every level of education, from preschool to university graduate programs. “The students of today are the teachers of tomorrow, and there’s a deep yearning among so many high schoolers to serve and give back to the communities where they live,” said **Randi Weingarten**, president of the AFT. “Students want to make a positive impact on the world, and to do that there is no more powerful profession than an educator. But they need resources and supports to achieve their dreams. Our partnership with Educators Rising provides an optimistic, inspiring vision for our current and future teachers. This partnership will expand and expose thousands more students to a career in the classroom, with the collective support of those already in the ranks. It exemplifies how this and other career and technical education programs that engage young adults are crucial to both the long-term sustainability of the teaching profession, and our nation’s future.”

PDK International acquired the Future Educators Association in 1994 and rebranded the student organization as Educators Rising in 2015. Alongside this name change, it invested significant resources to develop a turn-key solution for districts to establish chapters and introduce programming so that districts could cultivate their next generation of teachers.

The new partnership was announced today as part of AFT’s president, Randi Weingarten’s presentation at the 2025 Educators Rising National Conference, a convening of about 3,500 middle- and high school students, in addition to college students pursuing teaching degrees. The conference is the venue for students from across the United States to compete for national titles in competitions aligned to the Educators Rising Standards which help prepare students to work directly in schools after graduation, or to be best prepared to earn their teaching credentials.

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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 excellence, service, community, optimism and leadership 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 education. 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 are passionate about serving those communities through public education, Educators Rising is changing the face of teaching. educatorsrising.org