



COLORADO
Department of Education

Educator Recruitment and Retention Program

Submitted to:
Colorado State Board of Education
Colorado Governor Jared Polis
Colorado House Education Committee
Colorado Senate Education Committee

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January 2022

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Executive Summary

This report details initial implementation of the Educator Recruitment and Retention (ERR) program pursuant to Senate Bill 21-185 (C.R.S. 22-60.3-201-205), including information concerning the Colorado State Board of Education (SBE) rules, stakeholder input gathering process, grant application release, and longitudinal evaluation. The ERR program is in its initial implementation stage. To date, the SBE has promulgated rules for the program and the Colorado Department of Education (department) has completed a stakeholder feedback listening tour to inform the development of ongoing recruitment and retention supports by the department, per ERR program requirements. There is broad stakeholder interest in the ERR services the department will provide through this program and the opportunity to leverage several related educator workforce development initiatives. In addition, beginning in spring 2022, the ERR program will award \$5M annually for tuition stipends of up to \$10,000 per qualified applicant paid to the preparation program in which the applicant is enrolled. Stipend recipients will be required to teach in a rural or small rural school for a minimum of three years.

Given the implementation timeline, this first-year report is limited to the initial stages of implementation. The evaluation report in future years will include program outcomes, the effectiveness of the strategies implemented, best practices and critical components necessary to support the program, and how these strategies, practices and components inform the design and implementation of the ERR program.

Introduction

The state has given increased attention in recent years to the issue of developing and sustaining a high-quality educator workforce. A shortage of teachers is a national problem that Colorado continues to grapple with as the population grows, demographics change and enrollment in teacher preparation fluctuates. Teacher shortages are concentrated in some Colorado geographical areas and in some teaching content and specialty areas¹.

The Educator Recruitment and Retention (ERR) program, authorized by Senate Bill 21-185 (C.R.S. 22-60.3-201-205), directly addresses Colorado's educator shortage issues by providing support for the recruitment, selection, training and retention of highly qualified educators in Colorado. The ERR program is designed to accomplish the following goals:

- Support the transition of members of the armed forces into a second career as Colorado educators;
- Support non-military-affiliated candidates preparing to enter careers as Colorado educators;
- Match former military and non-military-affiliated preparation candidates with eligible high-needs schools; and
- Fill teaching positions in subject areas affected by the educator workforce shortage.

Evidence from Existing Educator Recruitment and Retention Initiatives

Educator Recruitment and Retention Initiatives in Colorado

In response to documented educator shortages throughout the state of Colorado, in recent years the legislature has passed multiple initiatives aimed at alleviating these shortages, including the Quality Teacher Recruitment, Retaining Teachers, Teacher of Record, Grow Your Own and Effective Teacher Residencies programs, among others. Each of these earlier initiatives has served to mitigate the shortages by supporting candidates, preparation providers and/or local education agencies. Annual legislative reports² document the impact of these ongoing initiatives and quantify the number of teachers positively impacted by each initiative.

Additionally, TEACH Colorado launched in August of 2019 to elevate the image of the teaching profession and increase the quantity, quality, and diversity of candidates entering the teacher pipeline in Colorado. TEACH Colorado is a statewide coalition of education institutions, government, philanthropy, and nonprofit stakeholders. The initiative is being led by the Colorado Department of Education, Colorado Department of Higher Education, Public Education & Business Coalition,

Educator Recruitment and Retention Program

- S.B. 21-185 provides \$5M annually for tuition stipends for preparation programs in which qualified applicants are enrolled
- Stipend awardees must teach in a rural or small rural school for a minimum of three year
- The department has solicited broad stakeholder input concerning the educator workforce development services to be provided

¹ See Colorado Department of Education (2021). Colorado's educator shortage: Survey results for the 2020-21 school year (retrieved from <https://www.cde.state.co.us/educatortalent/2020-21educatorshortagesurveysummary>).

² Educator recruitment and retention initiatives annual reports are available at <https://www.cde.state.co.us/educatortalent/researchandimpact>.



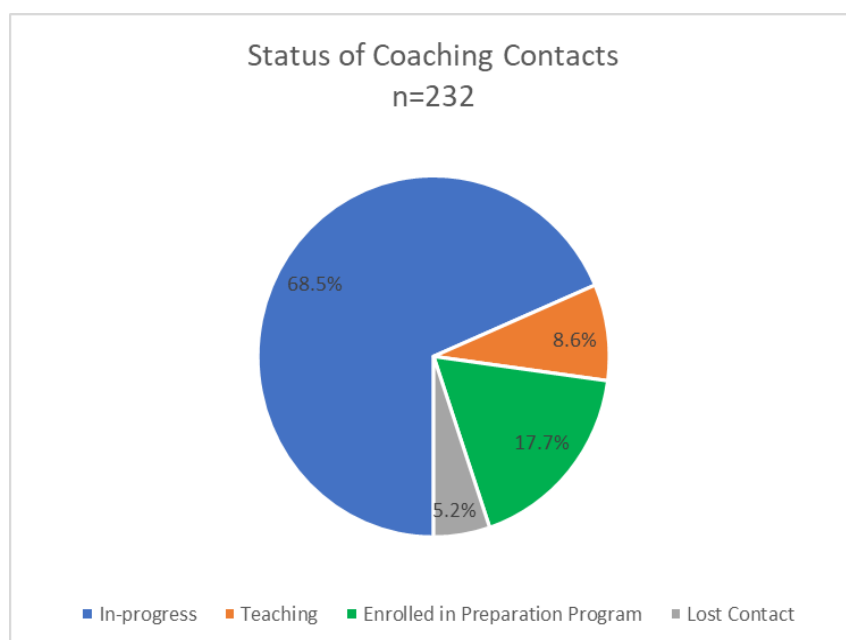
Colorado Education Initiative, and TEACH.org. TEACH Colorado is currently partnering with 100% of the educator preparation programs in the state, and school district partners represent a broad range of rural and urban areas.

During its second year (September 2020 through August 2021), TEACH Colorado supported 968 individuals who entered Colorado educator preparation programs (EPPs). TEACH-supported candidates were more racially/ethnically diverse than Colorado’s current teaching work force, with approximately 28% of TEACH-supported candidates identifying as minority compared to 13% of current teachers³. As TEACH Colorado continues to expand and grow, it will significantly contribute to the quantity and diversity of Colorado’s teaching force.

In addition to considerable partnership activities with TEACH Colorado, Educator Talent staff also engage in CDE-specific educator recruitment efforts. Since January 2021, these recruitment activities have included: coaching calls and emails; developing and offering no-cost Substitute Boot Camps; and creating and hosting Licensing 101 sessions⁴.

Over the most recent six-month period (June – November 2021), the CDE coaching phone calls and emails have reached 232 individuals who are potentially interested in careers as teachers and special service providers. Some of the contacted individuals are now either already teaching (over 8%) or are enrolled in an educator preparation program (over 17%). Figure 1 shows the distribution of each contact’s status.

FIGURE 1: Status of Coaching Activities Occurring Between June – November 2021

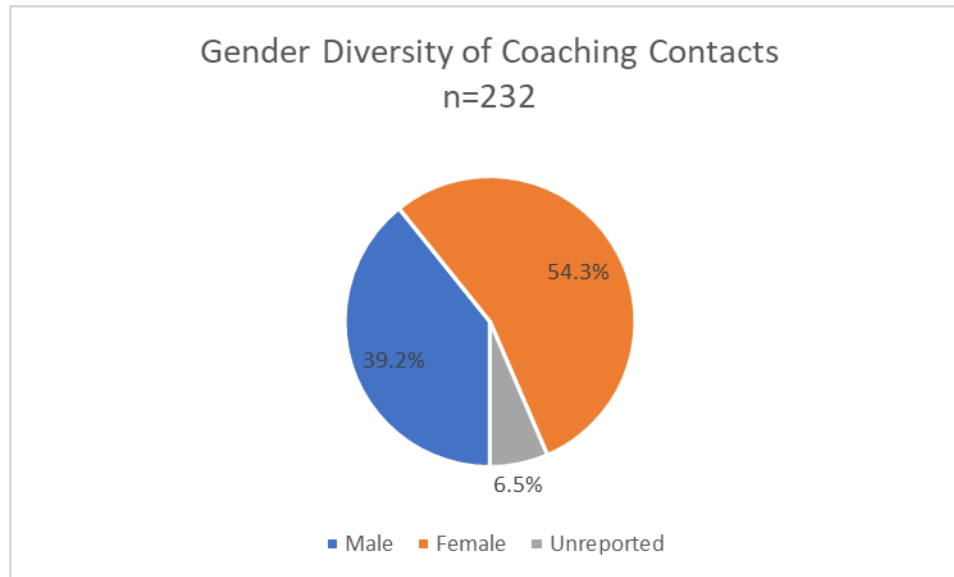


Notably, the gender diversity of the individuals reached through coaching calls and emails is more balanced than the current teaching workforce. Coaching activities have supported 39.2% male contacts, 54.3% female contacts and 6.5% unreported compared to Colorado’s current teaching workforce that is 24% male and 76% female. Figure 2 displays the gender diversity of the coaching contacts.

³ See, for example, Gershenson, S., Hansen, M., & Lindsay, C. A. (2021). *Teacher diversity and student success: Why racial representation matters in the classroom*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Education Press.

⁴ Additionally, CDE operated the federally-funded Troops to Teachers program from 2018 – 2021, which supported former military personnel to transition into teaching careers. Funding for Troops to Teachers Colorado ended in spring 2021, with potential refunding in 2022.

FIGURE 2: Gender Diversity of Coaching Contacts



Approximately one-third (32.8%) of coaching contacts have expressed interest in hard-to-fill areas, including math, science, world languages, special education, culturally and linguistically diverse education and special services areas.

Other important initiatives include newly developed substitute preparation and coaching for navigating the licensing process. Substitute teachers were recruited and supported through an online, no-cost Substitute Boot Camp, which CDE developed this past year. Between January and November 2021, these boot camps had 2,849 substitute teacher participants. Future educators were also supported through new, no-cost Licensing 101 sessions, which approximately 200 future educators attended between July and November 2021.

Similar to these promising, existing department initiatives, the newly funded ERR program is also designed to attract, prepare and retain high quality educators for Colorado schools and provides state-level infrastructure for significant expansion and ongoing support of educator workforce development.

The following ongoing workforce support services will be available through the ERR program:

- Educator recruitment support through one-on-one counseling;
- Educator recruitment through career and teacher job fairs;
- Substitute teacher boot camps for newly authorized substitute teachers and the employing local education provider;
- Job placement platforms for educators and hiring local education providers;
- Individual candidate coaching for job placement opportunities;
- Professional development through the first three years of service as an educator; and
- Retention counseling services for individual local education providers.

In addition to the above-mentioned services, qualified individuals can apply for one-time financial assistance provided to the educator preparation program in which the applicant is enrolled for up to \$10,000 of the tuition cost of their educator preparation program. To be eligible for financial assistance, applicants must agree to teach in a rural or small rural school district for three years. If the three-year service commitment is not met and the applicant does not have documentation of good cause, then the applicant must repay the financial assistance to the department within 90 days of leaving their employment in a rural or small rural school district. Additionally, applicants must meet the following criteria to qualify for financial assistance:



- Be enrolled in a Colorado-approved traditional or alternative educator preparation program or institute of higher education for applicants pursuing a CTE credential; and
- Meet one of the following:
 - Hold bachelor's or higher degree from a regionally accredited college or university and have secured employment as an alternative teacher or temporary educator eligibility educator in a rural or small rural district;
 - Be currently employed as a paraprofessional in a school district, charter school or BOCES while working toward a baccalaureate degree as required to pursue a professional teaching license; or
 - Secure a position as a CTE instructor in a rural or small rural district and meet state CTE requirements or have the equivalent of eighteen semester hours of postsecondary enrollment and six years of military experience that are applicable to a CTE credential.

Educator Recruitment and Retention Program Implementation

State Board of Education Rule Development and Adoption

On September 29, 2021, a publication of notice was issued for the Rules for the Administration of the Educator Recruitment and Retention Program. An informational item was presented at the October 2021 State Board of Education (SBE) meeting. CDE staff analyzed stakeholder feedback and made minor changes to the rules based on stakeholder comments. Subsequently, the revised rules (see Appendix A) were presented to and approved by the Colorado SBE during the November 10, 2021 meeting.

Stakeholder Input on ERR Services

Passage of Senate Bill 21-185 provides an opportunity for CDE to take a more influential and direct role in the development of the educator talent pipeline. With that in mind, CDE sought feedback from stakeholders across Colorado to consider how a state agency provides strong support for the recruitment and retention of educators, functions typically performed by preparation programs and hiring agencies, in a post-pandemic world. During the 2020-21 school year, school district/board of cooperative services (BOCES) leaders, educator preparation programs leaders, the SBE, and staff from the Governor's Office, Department of Higher Education and Colorado Workforce Development Council expressed interest in engaging with the Educator Talent Division during the development and implementation of the support services provided through the ERR program.

CDE used an outside facilitator, Government Performance Solutions, Inc. to use a structured functional change management and rapid prototyping model known as Design Thinking to gather feedback from stakeholders during the months of August and September. Feedback came from multiple stakeholders, particularly school district/BOCES leaders, educator preparation programs, the SBE, Governor's office, Department of Higher Education, Colorado Workforce Development Council, early childhood educators, elementary and secondary teachers, administrators, and several department offices. There were seven (7) sessions and, in total, more than 50 individuals provided input.

At the time of this report, the contractor's summary report draft has been delivered and is under review. The resultant findings will be used to guide and inform the ERR support services provided through the ERR program.

Tuition Stipend Application Release

Grant applications will be available by February 2021. Applications must be submitted by educator preparation candidates, with appropriate corroborating documentation regarding enrollment and employment. For approved applicants, the tuition stipend will be paid directly to the educator preparation program or institute of higher education. Additional ERR program information will continue to be posted on the ERR website (<https://www.cde.state.co.us/educatortalent/educatorrecruitmentandretention>).

Longitudinal Comprehensive Evaluation

The vision for the ERR program evaluation is an analysis of the effectiveness of the ERR program and how it combines with the other complementary shortage initiatives across the department to provide understanding of the collective impact on the educator workforce of all related efforts. The successful implementation of recruitment and retention activities will result in fewer shortages and increased production and better retention of high-quality educators. Formative evaluation



strategies will allow the department to continuously improve ERR supports throughout the year. Summative evaluation strategies will allow the department to annually evaluate progress toward reaching overall workforce outcome goals.

Annual Reporting Requirements

Once the ERR program has been implemented, the department must annually submit a report regarding the implementation of the ERR program. This report will include program outcomes, the effectiveness of the strategies implemented, best practices and critical components necessary to support the program, and how these strategies, practices and components inform the design and implementation of the ERR program. Specific reporting requirements outlined in statute include:

- The number of individuals reached through program communications;
- The total number of applicants;
- The total number of qualified program participants;
- The total amount of financial assistance distributed;
- The number of educator licensure certificates awarded through the ERR program;
- The completion rate for participating educator preparation programs;
- Data collected from the qualified program participants and employing local education providers concerning the effectiveness of the program; and
- Recommendations, if any, for legislative or regulatory changes to facilitate the effective implementation of the program.

Final Report Requirements

Additionally, on or before July 1, 2031, the department will submit a compilation of the annual reports described above to address the outcomes achieved by the ERR program and the effectiveness of the ERR program in meeting its goals for educator recruitment and retention. Based on the outcomes and effectiveness of the program, the department will also include a recommendation for whether the program should be continued, amended, or repealed.

Conclusion

The ERR program, established pursuant to S.B. 21-185, is in its initial implementation stages. To date, the SBE has promulgated rules for the program and the department has completed a stakeholder feedback listening tour. There is broad stakeholder interest in the ERR services the department will provide through this program and the opportunity to leverage several related educator workforce development initiatives. The comprehensive evaluation approach will consider the collective contribution of efforts through the department in the effort to bolster and sustain Colorado's educator workforce. Information concerning the educator workforce recruitment and retention strategies and the impact on educator shortages will be reported on in future years as the data become available.



Appendix A

RULES FOR THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE EDUCATOR RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION PROGRAM

1 CCR 301-113

1.0 STATEMENT AND BASIS OF PURPOSE

Section 22-60.3-202, et seq. C.R.S., creates the Educator Recruitment and Retention Program. The purpose of the program is to provide support to members of the armed forces, nonmilitary-affiliated educator candidates, and local education providers to recruit, select, train, and retain highly qualified educators across the state.

The statutory authority for these rules is found in section 22-60.3-202(5), C.R.S., which permits the State Board to adopt rules as necessary to implement the program.

2.0 DEFINITIONS

- 2.1 “Alternative teacher” means a teacher who has been issued an alternative teacher license as defined in 22-605.5-201(a).
- 2.2 “CTE credential” means Career and Technical Education authorization as defined in 22-60.5-111(9) C.R.S.
- 2.3 “Department” means the Department of Education created and existing pursuant to section 24-1-115, C.R.S.
- 2.4 “Educator preparation program” means an approved program of preparation, as defined in section 22-60.5-102(8), or an alternative teacher program, as defined in section 22-60.5-102(5), or other organization that provides educator preparation for a qualified program participant and is approved by the Department.
- 2.5 “Program” means the Educator Recruitment and Retention Program created in section 22-60.3-202, C.R.S.
- 2.6 “Local Education Provider” means a school district, a charter school authorized by a school district pursuant to part 1 of article 30.5 of title 22, a charter school authorized by the State Charter School Institute pursuant to part 5 of article 30.5 of title 22, or a Board of Cooperative Services created and operating pursuant to article 5 of title 22 that operates one or more public schools.
- 2.7 “Member of the armed forces” means a member of the Army, Air Force, Navy, Marine Corps, Coast Guard, Space Force, or any of the armed forces’ active reserve components, or of the National Guard.
- 2.8 “Qualified program participant” means an individual who meets the program criteria and is either a member of the armed forces or a nonmilitary-affiliated educator candidate.
- 2.9 “Rural School District” means a school district in Colorado that the Department determines is rural, based on the geographic size of the school district and the distance of the school district from the nearest large, urbanized area, and the total student enrollment is six thousand five hundred or fewer students.
- 2.10 “Separation” means honorable discharge, release from active duty, release from custody and control of the armed forces, or a similar change in active or reserve status.
- 2.11 “Small rural school district” means a school district in Colorado that the Department determines is rural, based on the geographic size of the school district and the distance of the school district from the nearest large, urbanized area, and that enrolls fewer than one thousand students in pre-kindergarten through twelfth grade.
- 2.12 “State Board” means the State Board of Education created and existing pursuant to section 1 of article IX of the state constitution.
- 2.13 “Temporary educator eligibility (TEE) educator” means an educator who has been issued a temporary educator eligibility authorization as defined in 22-60.5-11(5).



3.0 FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

- 3.01 A member of the armed forces with honorable discharge status or currently serving, or a nonmilitary-affiliated educator candidate may apply to the program to receive financial assistance of up to \$10,000 for the tuition cost of an educator preparation program in which the applicant is enrolled.
- 3.02 The department shall review each application and determine whether the applicant meets the following criteria for participation in the program:
- 3.02(1) Is enrolled in a Colorado-approved traditional or alternative educator preparation program or institute of higher education for applicants pursuing a CTE credential;
- 3.02(2) Meets one of the following:
- 3.02(2)(a) Has earned bachelor's or higher degree from a regionally accredited college or university and has secured employment as an alternative teacher or temporary educator eligibility (TEE) educator in a rural or small rural district; or
 - 3.02(2)(b) Is currently employed as a paraprofessional in a school district, charter school or BOCES and is working toward a baccalaureate degree as required to pursue a professional teaching license; or
 - 3.02(2)(c) Has secured a position as a CTE instructor in a rural or small rural district and meets state CTE requirements:
 - 3.02(3)(c)(i) as outlined in 23-60-304(3)(a) and section 4.04 of 1 CCR 301-37; or
 - 3.02(3)(c)(ii) has the equivalent of eighteen (18) semester hours of postsecondary enrollment and six (6) years of military experience that are applicable to a CTE credential.
- 3.03 Subject to available appropriations, upon determination of qualification, the Department shall provide to the educator preparation program in which the qualified program participant is enrolled one-time financial assistance of up to \$10,000 for the tuition cost of the educator preparation program.
- 3.03(1) As a condition of receiving financial assistance, applicants must agree to serve for a minimum of three years in a rural or small rural district. Residency year(s) in an approved alternative preparation program can count towards the years of teaching in a rural school district.
- 3.03(1)(c) For programs that are more than one year in length, payments may be made to the Educator Preparation Program in multiple installments throughout the duration of the program.
- 3.03(1)(c)(i) The Department will enter into a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with any educator preparation program that is not part of an institute of higher education and an inter-agency agreement with any institute of higher education that is not an approved Educator Preparation Program, such as those community colleges who may provide required courses for applicants seeking a CTE credential and teaching position.
- 3.04 If the qualified program participant does not fulfill the service condition outlined in Rule 3.03(1), and without documentation of good cause (such as illness, death, spouse military transfer, etc.), the participant shall repay the awarded financial assistance to the Department within 90 days of leaving their employment in a rural or small rural school district.
- 3.04(1) Program participants must sign an agreement acknowledging the commitment to teach in a rural or small rural district for three years as a condition of funding and agreeing to pay back the funds if they do not complete the service obligation.
- 3.04(2) Program participants must also annually certify their continued employment in a rural or small rural district for the entire three-year service period.

4.0 APPLICATIONS

Qualified program participants who wish to receive financial assistance must submit an application to the Department.



4.1 Application timeline

4.01(1) The Department will make the application form available to applicants by February 1, 2022, and annually every year after that.

4.01(2) Applications will be accepted on a rolling basis.

4.01(3) The Department will notify applicants of the decision on their application within 30 days of receipt of the application.

4.2 Application contents

4.02(1) The Department will develop a program application form. Each application, at a minimum, must specify:

4.02(1)(a) Applicant name

4.02(1)(b) Race

4.02(1)(c) Gender

4.02(1)(d) Educator preparation program in which the applicant is currently enrolled

4.02(1)(e) Military status

4.02(1)(f) Highest level of education attained

4.02(1)(g) Applicable employment as a paraprofessional

4.02(1)(h) Documentation of relevant coursework, military experience, or other professional experience which meets the eligibility criteria for a CTE credential

4.02(1)(i) Relevant employment documentation:

4.02(1)(i)(i) Current verification of employment as a CTE instructor, alternative teacher, or paraprofessional; or

4.02(1)(i)(ii) Executed intent to hire form

4.02(1)(k) Agreement to teach for three years in a rural or small rural school district and agreement to provide the Department with annual certification of such employment on a form provided by the Department.