

GROW YOUR OWN EDUCATORS, UTAH

THE PROBLEM AND A SOLUTION

Utah is in the midst of a severe teacher shortage. When the school year started in 2015, **more than half of Utah schools still had vacancies**.¹ Shortages exist in every subject area, and extend to paraeducators as well – the teaching aides and assistants who are so critical to keeping our schools running. Underlying this shortage is a startling rate of teacher attrition. **Over half of new Utah teachers quit within seven years**. The issue is even more pronounced among younger teachers (almost 75% leave within seven years) and in “hard-to-staff” schools, such as those in urban, low-income communities.²

There are multiple reasons for this crisis. Low pay, large class sizes, and a need for more teacher mentorship are all contributing factors. As we address these and other critical issues, we have an opportunity and to expand our notions of *who* we recruit into teaching and *how* we support them. There are many aides, parents, and community members in hard-to-staff schools who have the potential to be highly effective and committed teachers, but who face numerous barriers to entering the teaching profession.

Grow Your Own (GYO) teacher programs across the country have shown that they can overcome these barriers. GYO programs create pathways for local parents, community members, and paraeducators to become licensed teachers. Research has shown that **GYO programs graduate high quality teachers who are more likely to work in, and stay in, hard-to-staff schools**.³ Moreover, they have additional benefits such as building trust between communities and schools and diversifying the teacher workforce in communities of color.⁴

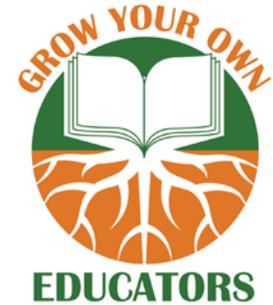
THE PROGRAM

Grow Your Own Educators (GYOE), Utah is a district-university-community partnership aimed at growing and stabilizing the K-12 educator workforce in Title 1 schools. Partners include staff and faculty from the University of Utah, Salt Lake Community College, Utah State University, and the Salt Lake City School District. The program will initially target schools on the west side of Salt Lake Valley, with the opportunity to expand as we demonstrate an effective model.

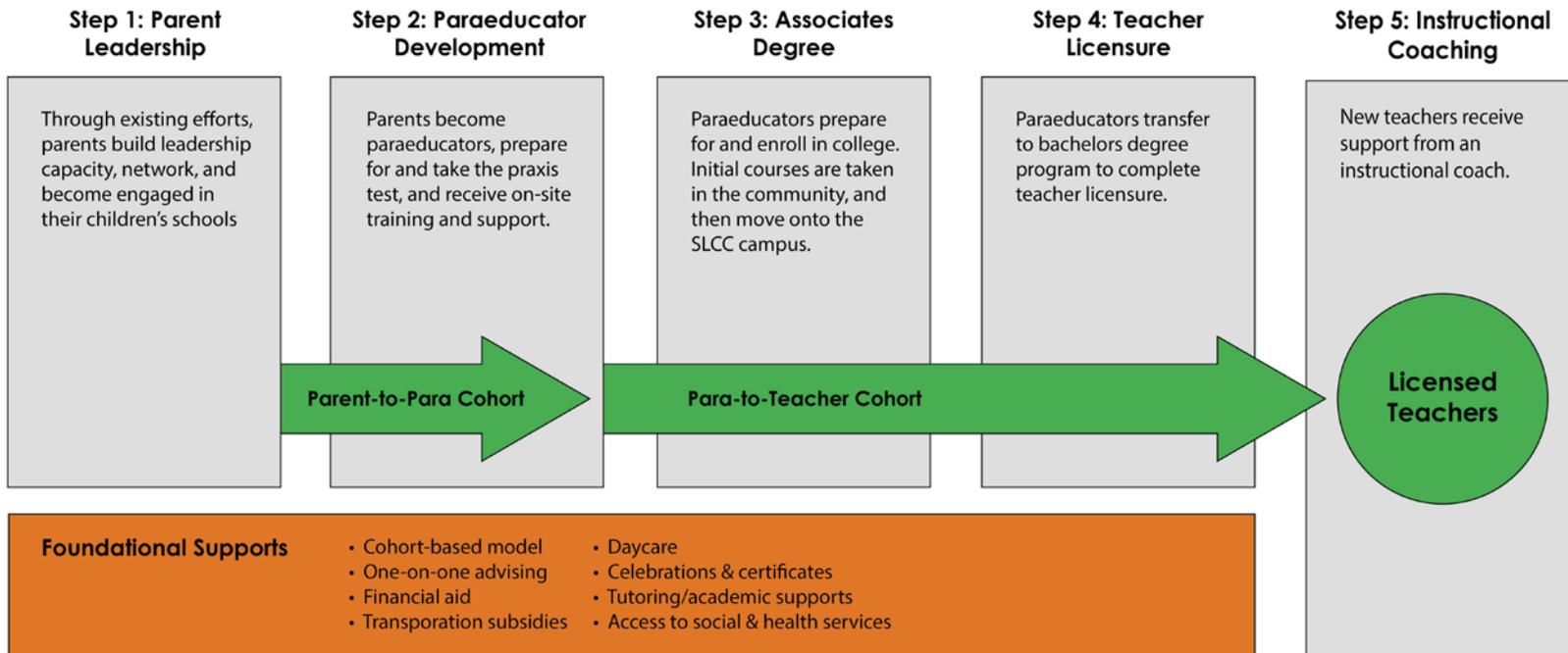
GYOE opens up pathways for parents to step into paraeducator roles in schools, and for paraeducators to earn teaching licenses and become successful classroom teachers. GYOE lowers the financial and social barriers that members of low-income communities and communities of color face when entering the teaching profession. When fully implemented, GYOE will involve two cohorts advancing simultaneously along their professional pathways. One is made up of working paraeducators interested in becoming licensed teachers. The other is made up of parents and community members who are interested in taking on and training for paraeducator positions in schools.

GYOE is committed to providing all the supports needed to ensure successful completion of academic pathways. In addition to financial aid, this includes what the Lumina Foundation calls “beyond financial aid”: daycare, tutoring, advising, facilitated cohort experiences, and other supports that are shown to decrease barriers to higher education among underrepresented groups.

Partners have committed resources to cover costs related to program management, initial course offerings, and program assessment. The partnership has also identified existing scholarships that can be leveraged for GYOE participants, including AmeriCorps education awards and the state’s Paraeducator To Teacher Scholarship. We are currently seeking additional funding of up to \$150,000 per year for full implementation. These funds would cover the cost of a full-time program coordinator, additional scholarships, part-time tutors/mentors, and other “beyond financial aid” supports.



The Grow Your Own Educators PATHWAY MODEL



1. Utah School Board Association survey, 2017

2. Utah Education Policy Center. (2017). *At a Glance: Teacher Turnover in Utah*. Author

3. OER Associates LLC. (2012). *Grow Your Own Teachers: An Evaluation of Teaching Effectiveness: Executive Summary*. Author

4. Skinner, E. A., Garretton, M. T., & Schultz, B. D. (2011). *Grow Your Own Teachers: Grassroots Change for Teacher Education*. Teachers College Press