



NEWS RELEASE

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Colorado's educator preparation programs show increase in enrollment, drop in completion

Candidates of color continue to be underrepresented in 2017-18

DENVER – Feb. 13, 2019: Nearly 11,600 teacher candidates enrolled in Colorado educator preparation programs during the 2017-18 academic year, up nearly 6 percentage points from last year, but fewer teacher candidates completed their program, according to a [report](#) released today by the Colorado Department of Higher Education (CDHE) and Colorado Department of Education (CDE). Programs produced 3,320 teacher candidates statewide, down 4 percentage points from 2016-17.

Despite overall gains in enrollment, candidates of color continue to be underrepresented in traditional educator preparation programs. Non-Hispanic white teacher candidates made up 71.8 percent of teacher candidates, followed by Hispanic candidates at 15.3 percent. African American students made up only 2.3 percent of program enrollees.

“While we see promise in the fact that enrollments are up, far too few students are continuing on the path to becoming a teacher,” said Dr. Angie Paccione, executive director for CDHE. “I’m hopeful that the legislation passed last session—and our continued efforts this session—will drive more candidates into the profession, especially candidates of color. We know that students feel more cared for and actually perform better when their teacher shares their cultural identity. Preparing a diverse educator corps will help close equity gaps in our state.”

The report looks at students in traditional and alternative educator preparation programs. In the traditional route, candidates enroll in and graduate from an approved public or private college or university and apply for licensure. The state also has designated alternative educator preparation programs to provide additional coursework or training for Coloradans who already hold a bachelor’s degree.

“We’re pleased to see that the intense focus on educator recruitment and retention over the last several years is yielding more teachers preparing to enter our schools,” said Education Commissioner Katy Anthes. “While we are excited about this trend, we realize that there is much more work to do. We will continue to focus on increasing a high quality, talented pipeline of teachers, while also retaining the great teachers we have in our classrooms.”

Traditional Preparation

In total, 10,380 students enrolled in approved educator preparation programs at 20 public and private higher education institutions in Colorado during the 2017-18 academic year. The University of Northern Colorado led all public institutions in total enrollment with 2,796 students, followed by Metropolitan State University of Denver (1,771) and the University of Colorado, Colorado Springs (986). Among private colleges and universities, Regis University enrolled 713 educator preparation candidates followed by University of Denver (375).

Alternative preparation

Total alternative preparation enrollment increased by 2.2 percentage points for teachers and by 32.3 percentage points for principals from the 2016-17 to the 2017-18 academic years. The Alternative School Professionals in Real World Experiences (ASPIRE) program at the University of Colorado Denver continues to enroll the largest number of alternative preparation teacher candidates (232). The Principal Institute prepared the largest number of principal candidates (36).

Gender

Although more than three-quarters of all education candidates are female, 2017-18 saw an uptick in the number of males enrolled in both types of programs for the first time in five years. In traditional programs, 2,376 males enrolled in 2017-18, up from 2,219 in 2016-17. In alternative programs, 435 males enrolled in 2017-18, up from 401 in 2016-17.

Content areas

Most candidates enrolled in elementary education, culturally and linguistically diverse education, principal and special education generalist preparation programs; both culturally and linguistically diverse education and special education are high-needs areas.

Among high-need content areas, world languages saw the largest gains in completion rates, while culturally and linguistically diverse education, special education and art showed slight decreases.

Addressing the teacher shortage

Colorado's educator pipeline challenges reflect nationwide declines. Following several consecutive years of slides in enrollment and completion, the Colorado General Assembly passed [House Bill 17-1003](#), which required CDE and CDHE to conduct an [in-depth study](#) of Colorado's teacher shortage and publish an [action plan](#) to address it.

In response, several bills passed during the 2018 legislative session to attract, prepare, support and retain Colorado educators. In October, CDHE awarded nearly \$2 million in Plan Into Action grants to 17 collaborative projects designed to recruit and retain more educators. Among several strategies, the projects will establish teacher residency programs, leverage technology for improved professional support and encourage more teacher candidates to specialize in high-need content areas.

About the Colorado Department of Higher Education

Working with the Colorado Commission on Higher Education, we advocate, develop policies and support students to maximize higher education opportunities for all. The Department believes every Coloradan should have an education beyond high school to pursue their dreams and improve our communities. Read the CDHE master plan [Colorado Rises](#).

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