



COLORADO
Department of Education

2023-24 Teacher of Record Program Report

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By:
Research and Impact Office
Educator Talent Division

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Educator Talent Division
201 E. Colfax Ave., Denver, CO 80203
303-866-6628
EdTalentResearch@cde.state.co.us

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Executive Summary

The Teacher of Record (TOR) License and Program were created in 2018 (C.R.S. 22-60.5- 201(1)(a.5) and C.R.S. 22-60.5-208.7).ⁱ Designed to decrease the teacher shortage in Colorado by creating an additional pathway to licensure that meets the needs of individual communities, this program provides districts, boards of cooperative services (BOCES) and charter schools with a means to partner with traditional educator preparation programs to fill critical teacher shortages. Since the 2019-2020 school year, the first year for which there were TOR License holders and TOR Program participants, 70 educators have utilized this pathway.

Background

During the summer and fall of 2017, the Colorado Department of Education (CDE) and the Colorado Department of Higher Education (CDHE) conducted an in-depth study of teacher shortages throughout the state.ⁱⁱ In response to documented teacher shortages, the legislature passed legislation creating multiple initiatives to alleviate this issue. These included the TOR License and Program, which creates a recruitment pathway for districts, BOCES and charter schools to hire individuals as teachers of record while they are completing the last 36 or fewer credit hours of their traditional undergraduate teacher preparation program.ⁱⁱⁱ This initiative aims to address teacher shortages by developing a recruitment and placement pipeline that enhances the experiential training and preparation of teachers, customizes that training to the needs of individual communities, and increases the diversity of teachers in public schools across the state.

Teacher of Record License and Program

Two components make up the Teacher of Record pathway: a TOR License and a TOR Program Plan. The TOR pathway is designed for individuals who do not hold a bachelor's degree and are in an undergraduate traditional teacher preparation program at an approved Colorado institution of higher education (IHE).^{iv} An individual can become the teacher of record in their classroom while completing up to the remaining 36 credit hours of their teacher preparation program.

Individuals must have an approved TOR Program Plan to qualify for a TOR License. For the TOR Program Plan, the hiring district/BOCES/charter school and the IHE must collaboratively create an individualized program for the candidate to complete their teacher preparation program while employed as the teacher of record. The district/BOCES/charter school and IHE are responsible for providing support services and training. The TOR pathway allows local education agencies (LEAs) to recruit new teachers for critical shortage areas when no otherwise qualified applicants are available.

Participant Information

During the 2023-24 school year, there were 19 TOR Program participants. The 19 participants taught in 14 different school districts across the state and attended nine IHEs across the state. All 19 TOR participants completed their programs in the 2023-24 school year. Seventeen (90%) of those who completed their program plan to return to teach in the same district for the 2024-2025 school year. Demographically, 95% of the TOR participants identified as female and 53% as an educator of color. This program is contributing to the racial and ethnic diversification of Colorado's educator workforce.

The 2023-24 school year is the fifth year of TOR program. Of the seven 2019-20 TOR participants, four (57%) are currently teaching in a Colorado public school and hold an active Colorado teaching credential. Since the cohort consisted of only seven educators, its retention rate should be interpreted as an early estimate which might vary widely in the future.



Conclusion

The Teacher of Record Program pathway allowed districts to fill teaching positions in critical shortage areas that otherwise may have remained vacant while providing customized training and preparation to participants. During the 2023-24 school year, the program increased the racial and ethnic diversity of Colorado's educator workforce.

Introduction

Created during the 2018 legislative session to address the teacher shortage, the Teacher of Record Program established a new pipeline for the recruitment and placement of teachers (C.R.S. 22-60.5- 201(1) (a.5) and 208.7.) When a school district, BOCES or charter school needs a licensed teacher in a designated shortage area, and qualified applicants have yet to apply for the position, this pathway may be used to fill the position.

Designated Shortage Areas

Colorado's shortage areas are determined annually through the mandatory [Educator Shortage Survey](#).^v The shortage areas identified for the 2023-2024 school year for which one was eligible to have a TOR License were^{vi}: Rural (all subject areas), Business/Marketing, Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Education, Early Childhood Education (ECE), Early Childhood Education Special Education, Elementary Education, English Language Arts, Family and Consumer Sciences, Gifted Education, Industrial Arts, Instructional Technology/Computer Science, Mathematics, Music, Physical Education, Science, Social Studies, Teacher Librarian, Visual Arts and World Languages.

Teacher of Record License

The TOR License is designed for individuals who do not hold a bachelor's degree and are in an approved undergraduate traditional teacher preparation program at a Colorado institution of higher education.^{vii} With a TOR License, individuals can be employed in a shortage area as the teacher of record in their classroom while completing up to the remaining 36 hours of their teacher preparation program. Individuals must follow a CDE-approved TOR Program Plan to be eligible for a TOR License.

TOR Licenses are valid for two years and can be renewed if the holder does not complete a bachelor's degree due to unforeseen circumstances.

Teacher of Record Program

The TOR Program is an individualized one- or two-year program for candidates to complete their teacher preparation while employed as the teacher of record. Each TOR Program is created collaboratively between the hiring Local Education Agency (school district/BOCES/charter school) and the approved Colorado IHE where the individual is enrolled. Program plans must include direct supervision by mentor teachers, performance evaluations and preparation programs or other supports to help the teacher of record meet licensure requirements. The LEA and the Colorado IHE provide such support services and training. CDE's approval of the TOR Programs allows individuals to be eligible to apply for a TOR License.

Teacher of Record Program

- The Teacher of Record Program and Teacher of Record License allows individuals to complete their teacher preparation program while employed as the teacher of record.
- To be eligible for a Teacher of Record License, an individual must:
 - Have no more than 36 credit hours remaining to complete their bachelor's degree requirements;
 - Have not completed the required fieldwork;
 - Participate in a Teacher of Record Program; and
 - Be employed in a position aligned to their licensure program and in which there is a critical teacher shortage.

- 17 elementary school positions
 - 12 in rural school districts
- 1 English Language Arts position (9-12) in a rural school district
- 1 Mathematics position (Middle School)



Table 1 below details the TOR Program IHEs, school districts/charter entity, shortage and position areas by TOR participants in the 2023-24 school year.

Table 1. Program Information for Teacher of Record

Institute of Higher Education (IHE)	Number of TOR participants at the IHE	School District (SD) Name(s)	Shortage Area(s)	TOR License Endorsement	School Level(s)
Adams State University	4	Alamosa, Holyoke, Ignacio, South Conejos	Elementary Education, English Language Arts, Rural SD	General Elementary Education and Secondary English	Elementary, Middle & High School
Colorado Christian University	1	Kiowa	Rural SD	General Elementary Education	Elementary School
Colorado Mountain College	5	De Beque, Eagle County, Garfield RE-2, Lake County SD	Elementary Education, Rural SD	General Elementary Education	Elementary School
Colorado State University-Pueblo	3	Pueblo 60 SD	ECE, Elementary Education, Math	ECE, General Elementary Education & Secondary Math	Elementary School & High School
Metro State University	1	SD27J	Elementary Education	General Elementary Education	Elementary School
Regis University	1	Jefferson County	Math	Mathematics	Elementary School
University of Colorado- Colorado Springs	1	Montrose County	Elementary Education	General Elementary Education	Elementary School
University of Colorado- Denver	1	Holyoke	Elementary Education	General Elementary Education	Elementary School
University of Northern Colorado	2	Jefferson County, Morgan County	Elementary Education, Rural SD	General Elementary Education	Elementary School

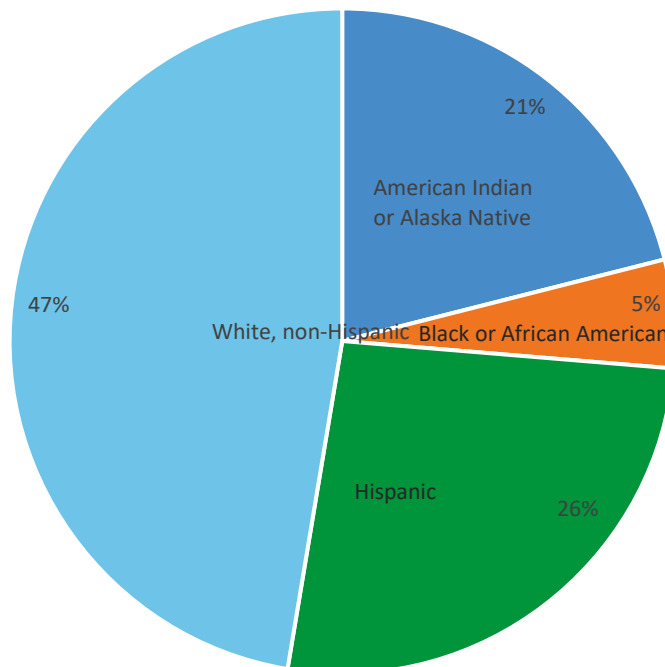
Participant Information

The ages of the TOR Program participants ranged from 21 to 49. Out of the 19 program participants, 11 graduated from a Colorado high school, one is a GED recipient and seven graduated from high school in a different state. Three participants are currently teaching in the school district where they graduated from high school.

At the beginning of the school year, 11 of 19 TOR participants had only their student teaching requirements remaining. The other eight had more courses to complete in addition to student teaching. The number of credit hours participants needed to complete to finish their undergraduate program ranged from 3 to 29, with an average of 18 hours.

Demographically, 95% of the 2023-24 TOR participants identified as female and 53% as an educator of color. Of those educators that identified as Hispanic, one also identified as American Indian or Alaska Native and one also identified as Black or African American. In comparison, only 15.7% of Colorado's 2023-24 educator workforce identified as an educator of color.^{ix} Figure 2 shows the racial and ethnic makeup of the participants.

Figure 2. Race and Ethnicity of TOR Participants





Participant Outcomes

All 19 2023-2024 TOR participants completed their TOR program and their bachelor's degree within the defined period of their program. All but one of them were rated "effective" on their district performance evaluation. The remaining participant received a rating of "partially effective". Seventeen of the 19 TOR participants plan to return to teach in the same school for the 2024-2025 school year.

TOR Program Participant and School Leader Feedback

To gather feedback from TOR participants and school leaders, CDE administered a survey to building leaders and 2023-24 TOR participants. The survey asked questions about how well prepared the participants' educator preparation programs made them to meet Colorado's Teacher Quality Standards (TQS).^x The school leaders' survey asked about the support provided to the TOR participants in their building, teacher readiness measured by the TQS and the level of support provided to participants.

11 of 19 2023-24 TOR participants responded to the survey, resulting in a 58% response rate. When asked, "If you could do it all over again, would you choose the same preparation program?" all TOR participant respondents said they would. Participants were also asked about their readiness to teach based on the TQSs. Using a 5-point scale (extremely adequate preparation to extremely inadequate preparation) for each TQS, TOR participants were asked, "To what extent do you agree that your preparation program adequately prepared you to..." all TOR participants respondents indicated that they felt they were extremely, adequately or somewhat adequately prepared on six of the nine TQS:

1. Demonstrate knowledge about the ways learning takes place, including student development.
2. Demonstrate knowledge of content and evidence-based instructional practices.
3. Provide instruction aligned with Colorado Academic Standards.
4. Foster an efficient and nurturing learning environment.
5. Adapt instruction for students' varying levels of ability, needs, and interests.
6. Work collaboratively with families for the benefit for students.

TOR survey respondents indicated that they felt least prepared on the following three TQSs:

1. Demonstrate leadership in the school, community, and teaching profession.
2. Demonstrate high levels of student growth in postsecondary and workforce readiness.
3. Demonstrate high levels of student learning growth, and academic achievement.

A survey link was also sent to the 19 school leaders with a TOR teacher in 2023-24 to get their feedback on the program. Nine of the 19 (47%) school leaders responded to the survey.

- 100% of school leaders who responded were satisfied or very satisfied with the TOR teacher in their building.
- 89% of school leader respondents said the TOR teacher is returning to teach in their school building next year. One leader stated that the TOR teacher was leaving the state.
- 93% of school leaders, all but one, said they would be willing to have another TOR teacher in their building in the future.
- 100% of TOR teachers had a mentor in the school building or at the district-level.

Retention and Licensure

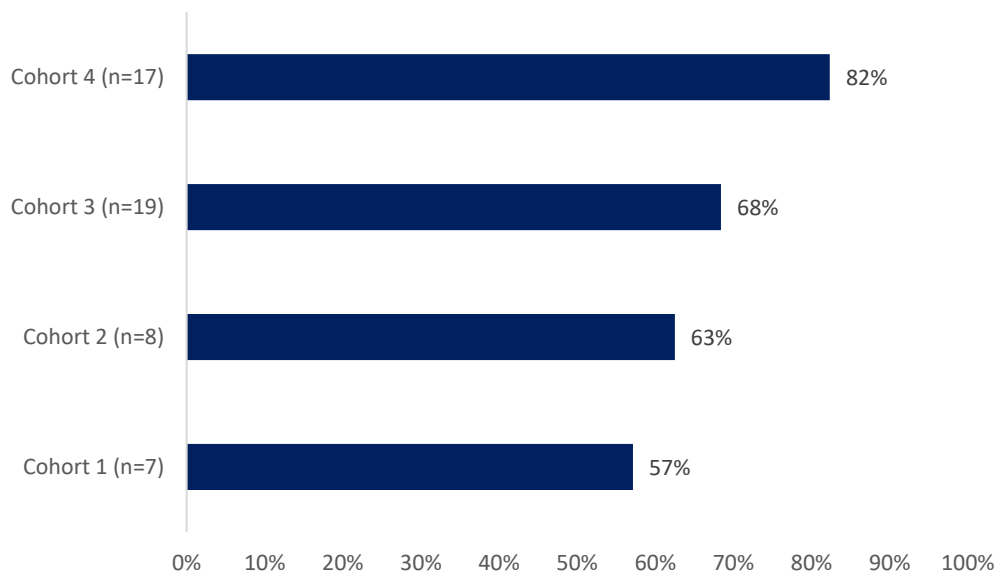
Retention of Cohorts 1-4

Retention for the TOR Program is defined by two elements: continuing to teach in a Colorado public school and maintaining a valid license in Colorado. Based on CDE's Human Resources Snapshot data, 36 out of the 51 TOR educators from cohorts 1-4 were still teaching in a Colorado public school at the end of the 2023-24 school year, reflecting a 71% retention rate. It is important to note that the human resources snapshot data does not include teachers in a private school or those teaching outside the state. Table 2 shows TOR cohorts by academic year, and Figure 2 illustrates the retention rate by cohort, where n is the cohort size.

Table 2. TOR Cohort by Academic Year

Cohort	2023-24	2022-23	2021-22	2020-21	2019-20
4	2 nd year in classroom	1 st year in classroom			
3	3 rd year in classroom	2 nd year in classroom	1 st year in classroom		
2	4 th year in classroom	3 rd year in classroom	2 nd year in classroom	1 st year in classroom	
1	5 th year in classroom	4 th year in classroom	3 rd year in classroom	2 nd year in classroom	1 st year in classroom

Figure 2. TOR Retention Rate by Cohort



Licensure Status for Former TOR Participants

Since the 2019-20 academic year, 51 individuals received a TOR license. Of those 51, four hold a TOR license (first- or second-year teaching), 29 have advanced their TOR license to an initial teacher license, nine have a

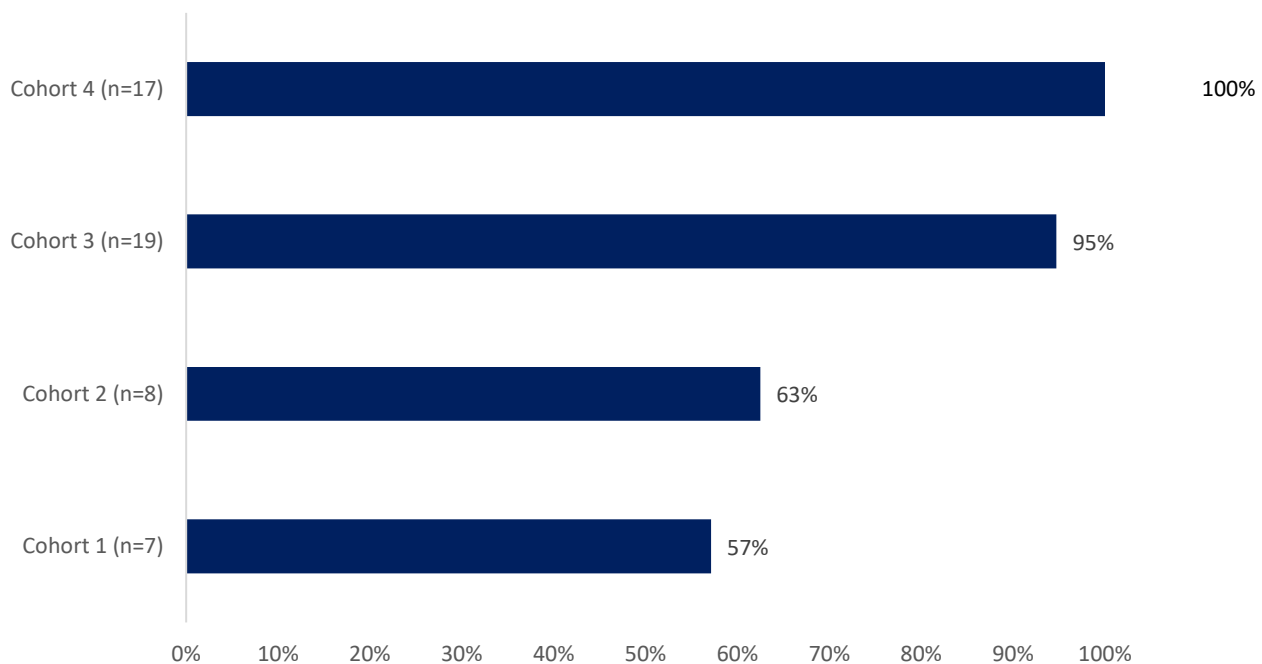
professional teacher license, and two have a Substitute Authorization. The other seven TOR participants do not hold an active Colorado teaching credential.

An analysis of TOR cohorts shows that 57% of the 2020-21 cohort currently hold an active teaching credential in Colorado. Five years after participating in the TOR program, three of the seven TOR educators in the inaugural cohort have a Professional Teacher License, and one has an initial teacher’s license. Similarly, 63% of the second cohort of TOR educators hold an active teaching license (three hold an Initial Teacher License, and two have a Professional Teacher License). Cohorts 3-4 have an average retention rate of 98%. Of these 36 educators:

- 4 hold a Teacher of Record License
- 25 hold an Initial Teachers License
- 4 hold a Professional Teachers License and
- 2 hold a substitute authorization.

Figure 3 shows the total active licenses by TOR cohort.

Figure 3 . TOR Active License in Colorado Rates by Cohort



Conclusion

The TOR Program allowed school districts to fill vacancies in critical shortage areas that may have otherwise remained vacant. By working in collaboration with nine higher education institutions, 14 different LEAs representing school districts across the state had one or more Teacher of Record participants in the classroom. This year, 19 participants filled various teaching shortage area positions and added racial and ethnic diversity to the state educator workforce. Additionally, the program continues to act as a “grow your own” avenue for educators to teach in the school district they graduated from.



Since its inception in 2019-20, 51 TOR participants were in the first four cohorts. Of those 51, 36 remain in a Colorado public school classroom, resulting in a 71% retention rate. Additionally, 86% of TOR participants in cohorts 1 through 4 hold an active teaching credential in Colorado.

Feedback from TOR participants and school leaders that had a TOR teacher in their building is positive. Most TOR participants would choose the pathway again, and 93% of school leaders would agree to have another TOR in their school building. The TOR License and Program continue to be an effective mechanism to help Colorado fill teacher shortage areas.



Endnotes

ⁱ The Grow Your Own Educator Program was created with the Teacher of Record License as an alternative to the Teacher of Record Program. The Grow Your Own Educator Program, comprised of all the same requirements as the Teacher of Record Program, also provided grant funding for the individual's tuition in exchange for three years of service in the district/BOCES/charter school after program completion. However, no qualified candidates applied for the program, and the program was repealed during the 2020 legislative session.

ⁱⁱ [Report on Teacher Shortages Across the Nations and in Colorado](#) by Colorado Department of Higher Education and the Colorado Department of Education.

ⁱⁱⁱ See endnote i.

^{iv} The process of educator preparation program approval and re-authorization for institutions of higher education is carried out collaboratively by the Colorado Department of Higher Education and Colorado Department of Education and includes initial approval and re-authorization not more than once every five years. Initial approval and re-authorization are required for any institution offering educator preparation programs leading to endorsement in Colorado, including public and private entities. However, [Senate Bill 23-258](#) consolidated the process, and the authorization will be the responsibility of the Colorado Department of Education beginning in the 2023-24 school year. For more information, see <http://www.cde.state.co.us/educatortalent/preparation>.

^v Starting with the 2018-2019 school year, the Educator Shortage Survey is required by statute per Senate Bill 19-003 and to meet Federal requirements per 34 CFR 682.201(q), 34 CFR 674. 53(c) and 34 CFR 686.12.

^{vi} The Teacher of Record license cannot be issued with an endorsement in special education regardless of its identification as a shortage area due to requirements outlined in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

^{vii} See endnote iv.

^{viii} For additional information on Colorado's Rural School designations, visit the [Commissioner's Rural Education Council](#).

^{ix} For additional information about the Colorado's 2023-24 educator demographics, visit <https://www.cde.state.co.us/cdereval/staffcurrent>.

^x Find more information about Colorado's Teacher Quality Standards, visit <https://www.cde.state.co.us/educatoreffectiveness/ee-tqs-ref-guide>.