



**COLORADO**  
Department of Education

# 2024-25 Teacher of Record Program Report

Submitted to:

**Colorado House Education Committee  
Colorado Senate Education Committee**

By:

**Research and Impact Office  
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## Executive Summary

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The Teacher of Record (TOR) License and Program was established in 2018 (C.R.S. 22-60.5- 201(1) (a.5) and 208.7) to help address the teacher shortage in Colorado.<sup>i</sup> This program allows school districts, boards of cooperative educational services (BOCES), and charter schools to collaborate with traditional educator preparation programs to fill critical teaching vacancies. In this pathway, these educational institutions can hire individuals as teachers of record while they complete traditional undergraduate teacher preparation programs.

The Teacher of Record (TOR) pathway consists of two main parts: the TOR License and the TOR Program Plan. This pathway is intended for individuals who do not have a bachelor's degree but are enrolled in a traditional teacher preparation program at an approved Colorado institution of higher education (IHE) and are within 36 hours of completing their bachelor's degree.<sup>ii</sup> Candidates can serve as the teacher of record in their classroom while completing their remaining credits.

To qualify for a TOR License, individuals must have an approved TOR Program Plan. This plan is developed collaboratively by the hiring district, BOCES or charter school, and the IHE. It outlines an individualized program that includes mentoring and other important professional learning opportunities for the candidate while they complete their teacher preparation and work as the teacher of record. The district, BOCES, or charter school, along with the IHE, is responsible for providing the necessary support services and training.

During the 2024-25 school year, there were 14 TOR program participants. The 14 participants taught in 12 different school districts across the state and attended seven IHEs across the state. Thirteen TOR participants completed their programs in the 2024-25 school year. Eighty-six percent of participants (12) plan to return to teaching in the same district for the 2025-2026 school year. Demographically, 93% of the TOR participants identified as female and 29% as an educator of color.

This school year marked the sixth year of the TOR program. Among the 15 TOR participants from the first two cohorts, eight (53%) are currently teaching in a Colorado public school and 11 (73%) hold an active Colorado teaching credential.

The Teacher of Record Program helps build partnerships between school districts, BOCES, charter schools, and IHEs to fill teaching positions in areas with a shortage of teachers. It ensures mentoring and other key supports for participants. The program's participants have higher than average retention rates compared to the statewide average, and building leaders report high levels of satisfaction with TOR participants.

## 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.

Colorado's shortage areas are determined annually through the mandatory [Educator Shortage Survey](#).<sup>iii</sup> The shortage areas identified for the 2024-2025 school year for which an educator was eligible to have a TOR License were: Agriculture & Natural Resources, Business/Marketing, Computer Science/Instructional Technology, Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Education, Dance, Early Childhood Education (ECE), Elementary Education, English Language Arts, Family and Consumer Sciences, Gifted Education, Health, Mathematics, Music, Physical Education, Science, Social Studies, Teacher Librarian, Visual Arts, and World Languages.<sup>iv</sup>

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.<sup>v</sup> 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.

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 (LEA), defined as a school district/BOCES/charter school, and the approved Colorado IHE where the individual is enrolled. Program plans must include the number of credit hours that need to be completed, 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 IHE are responsible for providing the 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

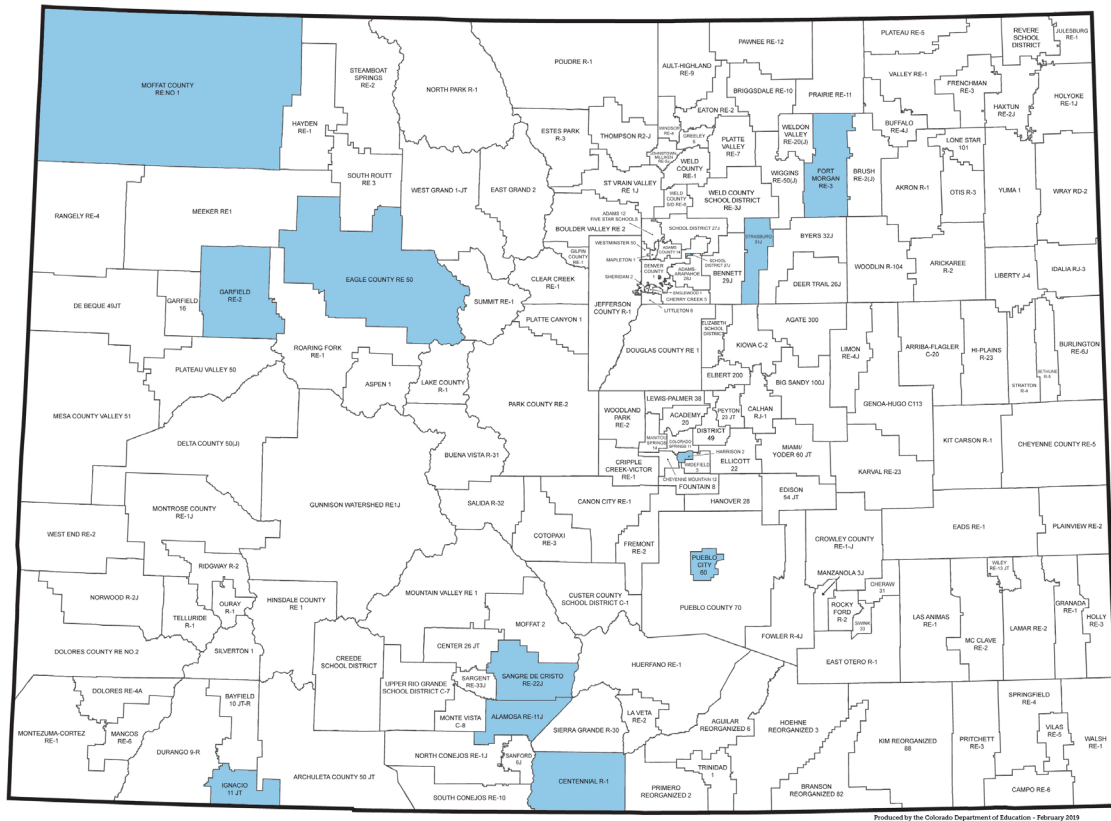
- The Teacher of Record Program and Teacher of Record License allows individuals to complete their teacher preparation program while employed as the teacher of record.
- To be eligible for a Teacher of Record License, an individual must:
  - Have no more than 36 credit hours remaining to complete their 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.

## Teacher of Record Program

### Program Information

In the 2024-25 school year, 14 TOR Program participants attended seven different IHEs and were employed by 12 LEAs across the state. This year 64% of TOR participants worked in rural school districts.<sup>vi</sup> Figure 1 below highlights the school districts with a TOR Program participant for the 2024-2025 school year.

**Figure 1. School Districts with TOR Participants in the 2024-25 School Year**



If needed, TOR programs may last up to two years. In the 2024-25 school year, 13 of 14 participants completed their requirements in one year. The positions and shortage areas filled by program participants in 2024-25 are:

- 1 preschool position in a rural school district
- 5 elementary school positions
  - 3 in rural school districts
- 1 English Language Arts position (Middle School) in a rural school district
- 2 Physical Education positions
  - 1 in a rural school district
- 2 Science positions (Middle and High School)
  - 1 in a rural school district
- 2 Social Studies positions (Middle and High School)
  - 1 in a rural school district
- 1 Visual Arts position (K-12) in a rural school district



Table 1 below details the TOR program IHEs, school districts/charter entity, shortage and position areas by TOR participants in the 2024-25 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)	School Level(s)
Adams State University	2	Alamosa, Sangre de Cristo	Elementary Education, English Language Arts	Elementary and Middle School
Colorado Mountain College	2	Eagle County, Garfield RE-2	Elementary Education, Early Childhood (PreK-3)	Preschool and Elementary School
Colorado State University-Pueblo	2	Pueblo 60	Elementary Education, Science	Elementary and Middle School
Fort Lewis College	2	Ignacio	Elementary Education, Social Studies	Elementary and Middle School
Metro State University	1	SD27J	Social Studies	High School
University of Colorado- Colorado Springs	1	Harrison	Elementary Education	Elementary School
Western State University	4	Centennial, Moffat SD, Morgan County, Strasburg	Physical Education, Science, Visual Arts	Elementary, Middle & High School

## Participant Information

TOR program participants ranged in age from 20 to 51 years old, with an average of 32. Ten TOR participants graduated from a Colorado high school, and four graduated from high school in a different state. Three of the ten are working in school districts from which they graduated.

At the beginning of the school year, five TOR participants had only their student teaching requirements left to complete (13 or fewer credit hours), while nine had more courses to complete in addition to student teaching. The number of credit hours participants needed to complete their undergraduate program ranged from 12 to 27, with an average of 20.

Demographically, 93% of the 2023-24 TOR participants identified as female and 29% as an educator of color. In comparison, last year, 95% of TOR participants identified as female and 53% as an educator of color.



## Participant Outcomes

During the 2024-25 school year, 13 participants in the TOR program completed their program and earned their bachelor's degree. One participant did not finish the program and will continue the program in the 2025-26 school year. Most participants received ratings of either "effective" or "highly effective" on their district performance evaluations, while one was rated "partially effective." Of the 14 participants, 12 will return to teach at the same school for the 2025-26 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 2024-25 TOR participants. The survey asked questions about how well the participants' educator preparation programs prepared them to meet Colorado's Teacher Quality Standards (TQS).<sup>vii</sup> The school leaders' survey asked about the support provided to the TOR participants in their building, teacher readiness as measured by the TQS and the level of support provided to participants.

The participant survey had a 36% response rate (n=5). 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 4-point scale (strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree) 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 stated that they strongly agreed or agreed that their preparation program adequately prepared them for all 12 elements of the TQS. TOR survey respondents indicated that they felt the least prepared on the following five elements of the TQSs:

1. Demonstrate leadership in the school, community, and teaching profession.
2. Respond to a complex, dynamic environment.
3. Foster an efficient and nurturing learning environment.
4. Use formal and informal methods to assess learning, provide feedback, and use results.
5. Adapt instruction for students of varying levels of ability, needs, and interests.

A survey link was also sent to the 14 school leaders with a TOR teacher in 2024-25 to get their feedback on the program. The school leaders' survey had a 50% response rate (n=7). All the survey respondents were:

- Extremely satisfied or somewhat satisfied with the TOR teacher in their building.
- Said the TOR teacher is returning to teach in their school building next year.
- Reported that the TOR teacher had a mentor in the school building.
- Would be willing to have another TOR teacher in their building in the future.
- Said the amount of time needed to work with the TOR candidate was about the same as that of an average new teacher.

One school principal said, "The candidate was amazing, and I am glad that she was able to become a teacher while finishing school. This helped her financially and helped our students academically."

## Retention and Licensure

### Retention of Cohorts 1-5

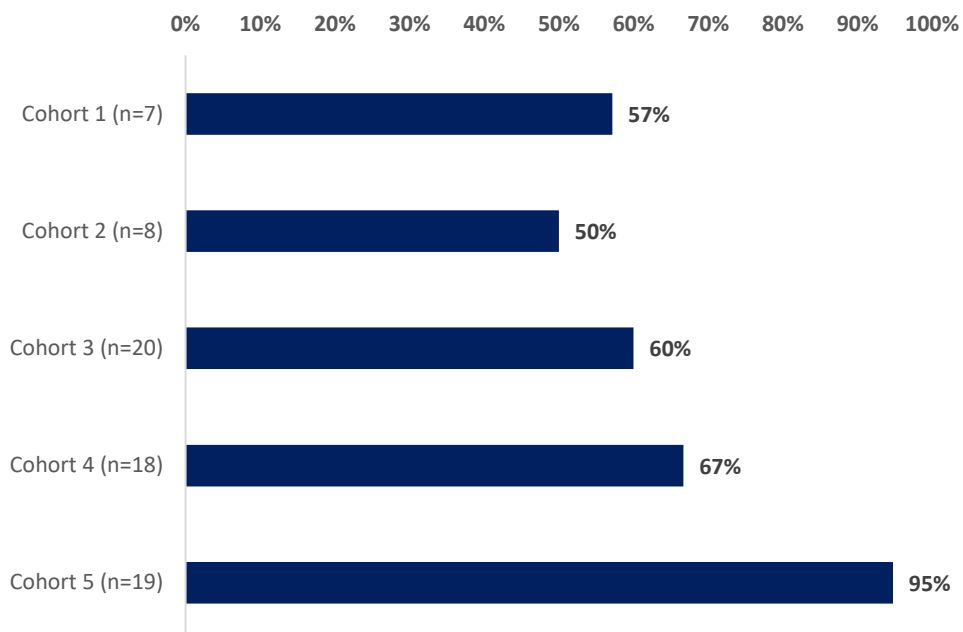
Two main factors determine retention in the TOR program: continuing to teach in a Colorado public school and holding a valid Colorado teaching license. According to CDE's data, 50 out of 70 TOR educators from cohorts 1-5 were still working in Colorado public schools at the end of the 2024-25 school year, resulting in a retention rate of 71.4%.<sup>viii</sup> It is important to note that this data does not include teachers in private schools or those teaching out of state. Table 2 shows the progression of TOR cohorts by academic year.

**Table 2. TOR Cohort by Academic Year**

Cohort	2024-25	2023-24	2022-23	2021-22	2020-21	2019-20
5	2 <sup>nd</sup> year in classroom	1 <sup>st</sup> year in classroom				
4	3 <sup>rd</sup> year in classroom	2 <sup>nd</sup> year in classroom	1 <sup>st</sup> year in classroom			
3	4 <sup>th</sup> year in classroom	3 <sup>rd</sup> year in classroom	2 <sup>nd</sup> year in classroom	1 <sup>st</sup> year in classroom		
2	5 <sup>th</sup> year in classroom	4 <sup>th</sup> year in classroom	3 <sup>rd</sup> year in classroom	2 <sup>nd</sup> year in classroom	1 <sup>st</sup> year in classroom	
1	6 <sup>th</sup> year in classroom	5 <sup>th</sup> year in classroom	4 <sup>th</sup> year in classroom	3 <sup>rd</sup> year in classroom	2 <sup>nd</sup> year in classroom	1 <sup>st</sup> year in classroom

As shown in Figure 2 (where n represents the number of participants), retention rates vary by cohort with earlier cohorts having lower retention in the 2024-25 school year. This is reflective of the national trend where most teachers stay after year one but retention weakens in later years.

**Figure 2. TOR Retention Rates by Cohort**







### Licensure Status for Former TOR Participants

Of the 70 participants across Cohorts 1–5, 59 (84.2%) hold an active Colorado credential. When combined with the retention data above, nine TOR educators continue to have an active credential and are no longer in a Colorado public school. Table 3 shows the active credentials held by TOR participants.

**Table 3. Active Credential Held by TOR participants in Cohorts 1-5**

Type of Active Credential	# of TOR participants	% of Total
Interim Authorization- Principal	1	1.7%
Professional Teacher License	18	30.5%
Initial Teacher License	37	62.7%
Substitute Authorization	3	5.1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>100%</b>

Note: Eleven participants do not have an active credential and are not included in the table above.

### Conclusion

The TOR Program helps school districts fill vacancies in critical shortage areas that may have otherwise remained vacant. This year, 14 participants, attending seven different IHEs, filled various teaching shortage area positions in 12 school districts across the state. Additionally, the program continues to act as a “grow your own” avenue for educators to teach in the school district where they graduated.

Since its inception in 2019-20, 70 educators participated in the first five TOR cohorts. Fifty TOR educators remain in Colorado public schools, resulting in a 71.4% retention rate. Additionally, 84.2% of participants in cohorts 1-5 hold an active credential in Colorado.

Feedback from TOR participants and school leaders who had a TOR teacher in their building is positive. All TOR participants who responded to the survey would choose the pathway again, and 100% of school leader respondents would have another TOR in their school building. Though the program is relatively small (84 participants) it continues to be an effective mechanism for some Colorado schools to fill teacher vacancies.



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## Endnotes

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<sup>i</sup> 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.

<sup>ii</sup> 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>.

<sup>iii</sup> 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.

<sup>iv</sup> 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).

<sup>v</sup> See endnote iv.

<sup>vi</sup> For additional information on Colorado's Rural School designations, visit the [Commissioner's Rural Education Council](#).

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

<sup>viii</sup> Two educators took two years to complete the TOR program. To calculate retention and current licensure status these individuals were only included in the cohort year that they completed the TOR program.