



**SOAR: Southwest Outreach  
Academic Research  
Evaluation and Policy Center**

Case Study of an Educator Pathway Program  
in One School District in New Mexico

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## Introduction

New Mexico is facing a teacher shortage that has only worsened in recent years, with 740 vacancies at the start of the 2018 – 2019 academic year (Trujillo & Villa, 2018). As the State looks for solutions to solve this problem, one program that has been given attention is Educators Rising, a national organization for high school students who are interested in pursuing a teaching career ([www.educatorsrising.org](http://www.educatorsrising.org)). Educators Rising presents these students with a pathway into a career in education, and when participants graduate from high school, the goal is that they will have completed a curriculum that includes coursework and field based experiences in classrooms and will be prepared to enter a teacher preparation program at a college or university.

One rural school district in New Mexico has been supporting the Education Pathway (Educators Rising) in their high schools for several years. This district has a high portion (over 75 percent) of students who are economically disadvantaged (qualify for free or reduced price lunch), many who are Hispanic, and almost half are English Language Learners (per the New Mexico District Report Card). Additional and more specific demographic data is not presented to maintain confidentiality of the district. There is anecdotal evidence that the Education Pathway program has led to high rates of students graduating from the district and returning to teach, however, this has not been formally studied. The goal of this project was to understand if and how the Education Pathway has influenced its graduates to pursue a teaching career, return to the district to teach, and what the challenges and opportunities exist for the program. This summary ends with key implications and recommendations based on synthesis of all of the information gathered.

## Data Collection

To address the study goal and understand what factors contribute to the hypothesized success of the Educator Pathway Program, the following data were collected. Institutional Review Board approval was granted prior to the start of any data collection:

- High School Student Surveys: All students at the three high schools who are in the Educator Pathway program (during Spring 2019) were surveyed about their experience in the program and their plans after graduation. A total of 223 responses were collected.
- Educator Survey: All educators in the district were emailed a survey that asked about why they chose to teach in the district, what their experience has been like working in the district, and about any familiarity with Educator Pathway programs. A total of 497 responses were collected.
- Teacher Leader Interviews: All three teacher leaders at the high schools were interviewed by Dr. Boren one on one, with interviews ranging between 40 and 60 minutes. Questions focused on their history and experience with the Pathway program, what they thought made the program effective, what could be improved, and their thoughts on the future of the program.

## Results

### Participant Demographics

Before looking at the results of the case study, it is important to know the demographics of the participants. Not all of the totals add up to the final number of survey responses due to participants skipping different questions.

For the high school student participants, most were sophomores or juniors, almost all were Hispanic, and an even higher portion were female. These demographics can be found in the Tables below. The three teacher leaders were all Hispanic females.

Year	Number	Percent
Freshmen	40	18%
Sophomore	84	38%
Junior	64	29%
Senior	35	15%
Total	223	100%

Table One: High School Participants Year in School

Gender	Number	Percent
Female	196	88%
Male	24	12%
Other Identity	3	0%
Total	223	100%

Table Two: High School Participants Gender

Ethnicity	Number	Percent
Hispanic	199	92%
White, Black or African American, Two or More Races, or Other	16	8%
Total	215	100%

Table Three: High School Participants Ethnicity

For the District educators, most were classroom teachers, with several other roles participating in the survey (top five in Table Four below). Over half were female, and about the same proportion were Hispanic. About half (45%) worked in an elementary setting, 30 percent worked in a high school, and 12 percent worked in a middle school setting, with the rest working in central office, alternative settings, or in multiple settings. In terms of years of experience in their current setting, many (36%) indicated they were in their setting for 11 to 20 years, with 30 percent noting more than 20 years, and a small portion (13%) indicating between six and ten years. Thus it is clear that almost all participants have been in their current roles for a substantial amount of time. These demographics can be found in the Tables below. Additionally, about one third (29%) graduated from a high school in the district, though slightly more (32%) graduated from a district in west Texas, and the next most common high school location was another New Mexico District (11%).

Current Role	Number	Percent
Classroom Teacher	288	77%
Educational Assistant	28	8%
Building Administrator	22	6%
Instructional Coach	18	5%
Administrative Assistant	17	4%
Total	373	100%

Table Four: Top Five Educator Roles

Gender	Number	Percent
Female	358	74%
Male	123	26%
Total	481	100%

Table Five: Educator Participants Gender

Ethnicity	Number	Percent
Hispanic	341	73%
White	97	21%
Two or More Races	12	3%
Other	16	3%
Total	466	100%

Table Six: Educator Participants Ethnicity

Post High School Plans and Teacher Educational Background

High school students were asked what their post-high school plans were at the time of the survey. Most (73%) indicated they planned to attend a four-year college or university, while several were not sure (11%) or planned to attend a two-year college (10%). When then asked about what factors were

important in their decision to attend a college or university (regardless of their exact plans), the most cited areas were the offer of a scholarship, cost of attendance, and the distance from home. When asked to specify the *most* important factor in this decision, results slightly differed, as cost of attendance was still near the top of the list, however, a specific program at the college/university was a close second. Frequencies for these responses can be found in the Tables below.

Post High School Plans	Number	Percent
Attend a four year college/university	157	73%
Attend a two year college	21	10%
Get a full time job	8	4%
Military	5	2%
Not sure	24	11%
Other plans	1	0%
Total	216	100%

Table Seven: High School Students' Post High School Plans

Factor	Checked as Important		Checked as <i>Most</i> Important	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Cost of Attendance	124	56%	60	32%
Distance From Home	101	45%	27	14%
Family Recommendation	19	9%	1	1%
Specific Program Offered	94	42%	58	31%
Scholarship Offered	147	66%	43	23%
Total	Not calculated-duplicated		189	100%

Table Eight: Factors in High School Students' Decision to Attend a Specific College or University

District educators were asked similar questions about their backgrounds. As with the students, the educators were asked about what factors influenced their decision to attend their college/university (if applicable), and responses differed quite a bit. Where students cited primarily financial reasons (or a specific program when asked to select one factor), the main factor cited by educators was the college/university's distance from home (57%). However, *like* the students, several educators did indicate the cost (37%), specific program offered (18%), or scholarship offered (17%) as important in their decision to attend their college/university. For additional background information about the educators, they were asked about their familiarity with Educator Pathway programs, and about one third (36%) noted they *were* aware of these types of programs. Most were acquainted with these programs because they had students intern or observe them as part of their requirements, and several indicated they knew students who were enrolled in the program. A small group of respondents noted that they have a family member or friend who is involved in the program.

#### Why do Students Participate?

The first open ended question on the survey asked students why they were participating in the Education Pathway. The most common response centered around how much the Pathway students like working with children, either broadly, describing how they found this an interesting area, or describing the impact and influence they wanted to have on children's lives:

*I would love to share my knowledge with others and create an impact on them as well. I want to be a good role model and nothing would make me happier than knowing that my students have succeeded and are happy in life.*

Though many students indicated they wanted to work with kids, several went on to describe how they wanted to work with them in a variety of settings both in and outside of the classroom, such as in medicine or other professions:

*To have the opportunity to work with kids, as in the future I'd like to be a registered nurse at a children's hospital.*

*The main reason I am participating in the Education Pathway Program is because I want to achieve my goal into becoming a neonatal nurse or a Pre-K teacher. This pathway is helping me view the important topics of a child or a new born.*

The next most common theme about why students are participating in the Education Pathway program was to prepare them for their future:

*I am participating in this pathway because I want to learn more about teaching and hopefully this career is for me.*

*Because I do plan on becoming a teacher and I'd like to start as soon as possible.*

The rest of the responses mentioned other reasons why students are in the Pathway program, including that they needed the credit, that they were advised to take these courses, or that they generally find the Pathway interesting.

Since the Pathway has been around for about ten years, there is a likelihood that current educators in the district participated. To gauge this, the educator survey asked about past participation in this program in the district. Though small (5%), there was a small contingency of educators who did participate in this program. Within this group, most indicated they participated because they wanted to encourage students to pursue a career in education or they were encouraged to participate themselves. These results are in contrast to the high school students, who primarily indicated they were participating in the Pathway program because they loved children.

#### Why Educators are In the Current District

During the interviews, the teacher leaders were asked about why they chose to return to the district as all three graduated from high schools in the area. All agreed that they felt a connection to the students and were able to understand their challenges and potential, having grown up in the area, noting "I see myself in [these kids]," and other feedback about how they were excited to help students achieve their goals and to show them how they can contribute to their community:

*I was eager to show the students the opportunities that they could have and I guess in a way to give my story that... you can give back, even if it's not something like – a lot of kids think that they have to, when they give back to the community it's like, go feed the homeless or do something like that. And I always tell them that even doing something small like staying in your community – you're giving back... because you're providing, giving your knowledge or experience or your story. So for me, it was knowing that I was*

*going to help students understand that. On a personal level, it gives me purpose. I'm doing something that I know is going to benefit my students, my community, and my district.*

In the educator survey, participants were asked why they chose to work in the district (open ended). The main reason cited focused on the proximity of the district (27%), with several educators noting they wanted to be close to home, a college, or near their family/children. The next most commonly listed areas centered on job opportunities (23%), or the district being a good place to work in general (20%). The area of community was also discussed (17%), as with the teacher leaders, many other educators described how they wanted to give back and genuinely liked the people in the district. Additionally, the small number of educators who indicated they were part of the Pathway program in high school mostly agreed that their time in the program influenced their decision to return to the district to teach (80%).

Teacher leaders were also asked to provide their thoughts on what components of the Pathway program were influential in students decisions to return to the district to teach. Again, the theme of community and family was discussed, as the teachers noted how the Pathway participants often returned because they want other students in the district to have a positive experience and to show them that they can achieve large goals while staying in the area:

*I've had some students that come and tell me that they want to come back and teach what I teach, and so I think it's mainly because they liked their experience so they feel like they would like to provide that too, in the future. And then, a lot of them have their families here and are culturally tied to their families and don't want to venture off, and I think being able to accomplish everything you want and stay close to your family and supporting them but also fulfilling your dream of being a professional and having a purpose.*

*I think it's the sense of community and family that we have here. I chose to come to [the district] because it was my family, it was home, and I just wanted to come and give back to the community that helped me so much.*

#### Administrator and Teacher Leader Support

Another factor involved in the success of the Pathway program is the support it receives from administrators at the high schools. Students were asked if their school leaders (principal and assistant principals) were involved in the Pathway program, and about half indicated they were involved in some capacity (56%), while several (31%) were not sure if they had been involved. All student responses can be found in the table below.

<b>School Leaders (Principal, Assistant Principals) Involved in Education Pathway Program?</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Yes - Very involved	23	11%
Yes - Somewhat involved	28	14%
Yes - A little involved	63	31%
No - They have not been involved	27	13%
I am not sure if they have been involved	65	31%
Total	206	100%

Table Nine: Student Perceptions About School Leadership Involvement in the Pathway

Students were then asked a follow up question about what the leaders in their school have done to either support the Education Pathway or discourage it. Most who responded indicated that their school leaders have been involved in a variety of ways, such as helping them with job preparation and search skills, supporting their fundraising, providing permission to participate in activities and field experiences, and checking in with students about their program:

*They participated in a fake interview, to show the class an example of how you should act during an interview.*

*The leaders in my school have helped us fundraise as well as supported us for competitions and at school.*

*Principals are always very generous and thoughtful and stop by our classrooms to check on us and see what we're working on.*

Though in the minority, a subset of students indicated they were not sure if their school leaders were involved or mentioned that they do not feel as though their school leaders are interested in the Pathway program.

During their interviews, teacher leaders were asked for their perspective on if their administrators were supportive of the Pathway program at their school. In general, the teachers echoed their students and noted that the administrators were supportive in different ways, such as doing classroom presentations or financially helping the group.

While administrator support is a key component of program success, so is the support that students feel they have from their *teacher* leader. On the survey, students were asked if they felt they received the support they needed from their teacher leader, and a strong majority (69%) responded “yes,” while the second most cited response was “sort of.” Very few did not think they received support from their teacher leaders. All student responses can be found in the table below.

<b>Education Pathway Teacher Leader Provided Support Needed This Semester?</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Yes	144	69%
Sort of	45	21%
No	17	8%
I'm Not Sure	4	2%
Total	210	100%

Table Ten: High School Student Responses About Perceived Support from Their Teacher Leader

Student comments about experiences with their teacher leaders were almost all positive, with students describing many different ways in which their teacher has helped them during the semester or in their overall time in the Pathway. These included areas such as encouraging them to continue the program, providing great instruction and helping them learn a lot, and supporting their journey and interests:

*[Instructor] was a good teacher. She gave us the information we needed in case we decided to take this class the following year and encouraged us to take the course again.*

*My teacher was very helpful and explained and taught us everything very well. She's very hands on with us and asks us many questions.*

*She has been extremely helpful when it came to giving feedback for assignments and is always so great with helping me make up my work and balance my schedule with other activities.*

A small group of students did indicate that they felt their teacher leaders sometimes had a lot going on and that they seemed a little disorganized.

#### Most and Least Helpful Program Components

Students were then asked to reflect on their overall Pathway experience and describe what parts have been the most helpful to prepare them to go into a teacher preparation program after graduation. The most commonly cited components (with a substantial majority) were the hands on experiences and opportunities, with several students citing their internship in particular:

*The part that has been more helpful is when we go with our teachers to help them and interact with the kids. For example I go help in the pre-k and help the teacher with the little kids.*

*What has been very helpful to me is helping at the elementary school. There I learned every kid learns different and they all have different ways to teach.*

*The most helpful thing was going to my internship, I feel like it helped me get ready or to see what it's really like in a classroom.*

A number of students also mentioned how helpful it was to learn about children – including how they learn and about child development:

*The most helpful part of this was learning how children learn and what is the most effective way to get them to comprehend something.*

Other responses about the most helpful component of their Pathway program included specific skills (e.g. how to prepare a lesson plan) and getting a preview for what teaching was like.

Teacher leaders also described how they thought the field experiences were hands down the most influential component of the program in terms of whether students ultimately decided to continue into a teacher preparation program after high school:

*Practicum, that's like the candy for them at the end, like, we get to learn all of this and then at the end, we get to put it into practice. And like, I've heard a lot of students tell me they weren't really in the Pathway to be a teacher - they liked the classes and then after the internship they changed their mind. We have on campus internships here, but it's really the off campus – I think and it has to do with the environment and the school and we're very fortunate that our feeder school, the teachers are very encouraging and positive and willing to mentor [the students] and give them opportunities to practice everything so the kids feel special when they go and feel like the teachers trust them to take over the lessons. If I have kids who started from freshmen year to twelfth grade, that's perfect because they get to experience all the different levels, but if they start late, they don't get to do to all the internships at the elementary schools, so they don't get to see everything and they may decide not to go into teaching if they don't get to see all of the schools.*



The practicum experience was described as extremely influential not only because it gives students the real life application of what they learned, but also because of the mentor teachers students are paired with. These teachers are very influential, in both negative and positive ways, for student's decision making about their future in education:

*In the kids point of view in what I've heard is teachers discouraging students from becoming teachers. and I've had students who have actually changed their mind because teachers tell them no or parents, and especially when they go out on the internship and some teachers are rude or like, just they don't have any filters when they tell the kids stuff and sometimes they're not the best mentors. They'll say that the kids walk all over the teacher and the teacher doesn't do anything and the kids break stuff.*

These findings illustrate how important the mentor teachers are in students' decisions to pursue or not to pursue a degree in education. For additional perspective on this, the educator survey asked if participants would encourage students to pursue a career in education if they were considering becoming a teacher. Half (51%) said they would encourage students, while several (28%) responded they "maybe" would encourage this decision, and about one fifth (21%) who responded that they would not encourage this decision.

Looking more broadly at general career choices, the teacher leaders also described how as part of the program experience, they had students explore career options to learn about what is required, which often led to important revelations and clarity that had a lasting impact:

*I tell my students from the beginning – it's ok if you don't like, if teaching is not for you but this is the perfect time for you to find out. If you're like me, you find out that you love children – don't you see me happy after this long? That's how it should be! The first thing I have them do is a career interest inventory, and I have them research the careers they really want to do and what it takes, because half of the class really wants to be pediatricians, but they have no clue how long it takes in school. I just want to help them plan their futures accordingly.*

In addition to the most positive components of their experience, students were asked if any parts of the Education Pathway program have *not* been helpful for preparing them to go into a teacher preparation program after graduation. Of those who responded, most indicated that they felt all of their program experiences have been helpful:

*So far all the stuff I have been taught has been very helpful so I believe everything has been helpful in its own way.*

The other responses about what was not helpful varied, with a few students each mentioning areas such as the lack of hands on experiences, too much information about children beyond what they felt was within the scope of the program (e.g. feeding babies, more about infancy), or assignments that did not seem beneficial for their growth.

### Teacher Leader Opportunities and Challenges

As students were asked about the most and least helpful program components, their teacher leaders were asked about their most positive and most challenging experiences in the program. When describing their most positive experiences in the program, the teachers warmly talked about the lasting

impacts that students had on them and the connections they kept with students even after they graduated:

*Making that connection with the student that goes beyond the teacher because they still come back and ask you questions and ask for help, they message me – can you write me a letter of recommendation, or what do I need for this.... and so getting to see them grow professionally as well getting their degrees and then coming later and thanking you like, that's really special. And also during high school seeing them grow and accomplish their dreams... you don't know the impact you have on them until you see them and they tell you. And for me it's really special to get them as freshmen and then see them through until their senior year until they graduate. And getting to see them become better at their presentations and their lessons and just seeing them become resilient and strong.*

*I have a former student and it took her 10 years to finish college and she decided to become a teacher because she said I inspired her. She graduated last year and she's a teacher now in the district. She gave me the best compliment I've ever received - she told me even though we got really close in high school and we've been friends for 12 years now, you never let me get away with anything... if I didn't do a lesson plan you let me know - you'd let me make it up but you never let me get away with it. And she told me – because I had them do those portfolios, she said, sometimes when I was in my education classes- if I didn't understand something I'd look in my binder that you made me do to find something to help me, and I used every single thing that was in there, in my education. And that's just one student!*

Teacher leaders felt their experiences in the program have been overall positive, however, they are not without challenges. The main challenge that teachers are currently facing is the rapid growth of Pathway enrollment, which, though they felt was exciting, is not to be overlooked or trivialized.

*When I took the program over the first year, there were like, seven students in the [practicum class] and nine in the [introductory class]. So I was like, let's bring it up! So somehow... the program started growing and it's like, what am I going to do now! A couple of years back I had 30 students in [the practicum class]!*

*The district wants all three schools to get the same number of hours but for the certification for early childhood they have to get 45 hours. This next year they told me I have 30 students...with so many how am I going to do it with 30 students? They need 45 hours for the certification and so I have this figured out, they get an hour and 15 minutes so I'm going to have to split them into two groups, first semester one group does elementary and one group does secondary, and then they switch.*

The growth in the Pathway program is not limited to this district, as statewide membership in Educators Rising went from around 550 in 2017 – 2018 to over 600 students in the 2018 – 2019 academic year. Teachers did cite the Carl Perkins monies, a federal Career and Technical Education funding opportunity, as very helpful with providing them the technology and supplies during this growth, however, teachers still find it necessary to fundraise for several program needs, including the conference, materials, and transportation to internship sites:

*Fundraising is ok but it only goes so far, because we already fundraise for Educators Rising for travel and things like that. The fundraising – we all try to fundraise for different things so tis really hard, so we're constantly having to do lots of extra things to fundraise, to sell to cover our transportation, and [the Statewide Director] does an awesome job paying for the hotel and meals for trainings and that's*

*awesome because then we don't have to fundraise for that. The students want to compete and they're ready and it's like, let's see if we have enough, and I hate to tell students we don't have enough money or that their parents have to pay for it.*

*There is an Educator Pathway curriculum that's new and we will get trained this year, but the students have to pay for the manuals and they can't copy it... and it's \$35 per student, and so we have to fundraise - our students don't have the funds for that.*

#### Overall Pathway Experience and Final Comments

The last part of this case study discusses overall participant experiences and feedback about the program. First, the high school student survey asked Pathway participants about if their experience has been what they expected and if it was worthwhile, and most students agreed that both of these statements were true. Frequencies for these responses can be found in the table below.

	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Not Sure</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Total</b>
My experience in the Education Pathway Program has been what I expected.	57 (26%)	122 (55%)	29 (13%)	9 (4%)	5 (2%)	222
Overall, my experience in the Education Pathway Program has been worthwhile so far.	68 (31%)	99 (45%)	34 (16%)	10 (5%)	7 (3%)	218

Table Eleven: High School Students Feedback About Expectations and Program Value

When then asked to describe why they Disagreed or Strongly Disagreed, most students who provided a response had very different reasons, however, the most common was that students expected to work more with students, wanted more hands on experience, and felt that they spent more time in areas they thought would not take up much time (e.g. cleaning, grading):

*I disagreed with "my experience..." because I thought it was gonna be more hands-on trying to figure out different ways and methods to teach kids and how to improve education for all kinds of people as a whole.*

In their interviews, teacher leaders were also asked a key final reflective question about how the Pathway program could be improved to help students better understand what is involved in a teaching career. They discussed the changes going on for teachers in the state (e.g. increase in salary, changing the teacher evaluation and assessment systems), noting that these may influence student teaching experiences, and also described how having more consistency and uniform standards and curricula would improve the program. The teacher leaders in the district work to collaborate and communicate to utilize the same scope and sequence for their students, however, schools across the state can differ widely despite their being a nationally recognized career pathway program. The difference in resources also makes it difficult for schools to adopt similar curricula and activities:

*There is a curriculum and the district has to purchase it for us to do it, and I'm not sure if it's every year or a one-time thing... and we all piloted it but we did it differently because one teacher had Chromebooks so I couldn't do some of the online activities. We pull from the South Carolina teacher cadet curriculum and it's like, whatever we can get.*

Finally, the last question in the survey asked students if they had any final comments. Several students took the opportunity to note how much they enjoyed the program and found it to be a wonderful experience:

*I recommend it to anyone that wants to become something that involved with children. It is a great way to prepare you for college/university. I enjoy doing field experience because I get to see high school behavior and how the teacher controls them when they have bad behavior. I also get to learn as well as the students that are in the class.*

*This program has helped me figure out what I want to do and what career I want to pursue. I've always wanted to work with children and this showed me I might want to be a kindergarten teacher.*

However, a small but notable group of students indicated that they also found the program a valuable experience, but mainly because it gave them the insight they needed to pursue other careers:

*Although I really enjoyed it, I don't think I want to continue being in the education field. I get too attached to the students.*

*I don't think I am sure I want to continue this path but I do know I want to work with children.*

### **Summary and Implications**

Overall, results indicated that students and teacher leaders in the Pathway enjoyed their experience, with educators in the district describing how they returned to this district because of the sense of community they felt. Synthesis of the findings yielded the main implications and recommendations below:

- The program component that had the largest influence on student decisions to pursue education was their internship/field experiences. These experiences need to be well managed with meaningful matching processes and helpful mentors who are excited about working with the students who will give them the opportunities to understand what is involved in a teaching career. Participants are high school students so they cannot have the same experiences in the classroom as a full-time teacher, however, the role that field experiences have in student decision making about their futures is clear and undeniable. Particular attention should be paid to the selection of mentor teachers, as their attitudes can have a profound impact on students as well.
- The substantial growth in Pathway enrollment suggests increasing interest in this career, and with over 700 teacher vacancies last Fall (per the SOAR Educator Vacancy Report), these students should be looked at as potential solutions to this problem. There are other initiatives that are aiming to address the teacher shortage in the state, and while one single approach will not fully fix the problem, support for this Pathway program is a worthwhile investment. These are students who have already expressed an interest in pursuing a teaching career, and with the growing number enrolling in the program each year, the Pathway can be a critical and robust piece of the pipeline for feeding students into teacher education programs who choose to stay in the state to teach.
- Although many students indicated that they went into the program to learn about a teaching career, several described how they went into the program because of their love of working with children and not necessarily their interest in teaching. Though exact numbers of students who

enter a teacher preparation program after graduating from this Pathway program are not available at the moment, it is clear that many students who complete the program were not intending to pursue a teaching degree in the first place. This is important to keep in mind when evaluating the success of these Pathway programs, as students still gain insight into careers through their participation and through the research that teacher leaders have them do about possible career requirements (e.g. the schooling required to be a pediatrician).

- A number of students also reflected that, though they enjoyed their time in the program, they ultimately decided that teaching was not for them after completing the Pathway. The perceived success of this program with helping to recruit and retain teachers may be due to how the program gives students the insight they need to make a truly informed decision about if teaching is for them. This may lead to them being less likely to begin a teaching career, only to quit shortly after having realized they did not want this position, resulting in low teacher retention rates. Solving the teacher shortage is not just about recruiting more new teachers, but also includes how to improve teacher retention and keep those already teaching in their positions. Students who complete the Pathway program may have the insight they need to avoid leaving teaching early on, thereby avoiding contributing to low teacher retention and exacerbating the statewide teacher shortage.
- The Pathway program does not stop after high school. Rather, students who maintain their interest in teaching are prepared to continue pursuing this career by entering a teacher preparation program at a college or university. It is important that the high schools and two and four year teacher preparation programs work together to ensure students have a meaningful and effective experience throughout their preparation, all the way from high school through college graduation. The high schools should know what the expectations are for students at the universities, and the universities should understand the high school curricula and background students bring with them when they enter their program. Regular meetings and conversations would be a good idea for all involved so that representatives from both the high schools and the colleges/universities in the area can stay up to date about each setting's updates and challenges.
- Educators Rising is a national organization, and some differences in how each high school implements the program are expected. However, it would benefit teacher leaders and students for more consistency within the state, and even within the district. If these schools are expected to implement a curriculum and experiences that will give students similar insight into the teaching career and preparation to teach, it would be helpful if schools had more structure and support they need to accomplish this goal. Differences in school resources and access to/usage of the national curriculum present a challenge for giving students a similar experience, and additional support (statewide) in this area would be helpful for the teachers.

## References

Trujillo, K. & Villa, S. (2018). 2018 Educator Vacancy Report. Retrieved August 1, 2018 from <https://alliance.nmsu.edu/files/2018/10/2018-New-Mexico-Educator-Vacancy-Report.pdf>