Grow your own: A model for developing high quality teachers and administrators

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2008 Rural Education Working Group
Tuskegee, AL - May 2008
Workshop Objectives

- Establish the need for GYO programs in rural settings
- Discuss the benefits offered by GYO programs
- Describe principles of GYO Teacher Programs
- Describe principles of GYO Leadership Programs
- Consider barriers to GYO
- Brainstorm strategies for developing GYO programs
Need

- Teacher and administrator recruitment and retention in rural settings.
- Culturally-responsive pedagogy.
- Community involvement in public education.
Benefits

- GYO creates a pipeline of teachers and administrators who are much more likely to stay in low-income communities, thus reducing turnover and creating stability for the students, while leading over time to a more experienced teaching force.

- GYO brings teachers and administrators into schools who know the history, culture and language of the community, and can understand the needs and issues of students and families as co-equals and neighbors.

- GYO teachers and administrators can communicate and collaborate with parents. These community-people-turned-teachers can, in turn, involve parents in the schools, and draw on the skills and knowledge of these particular parents to strengthen the schools.

Adapted from materials developed by Grow Your Own Illinois: see http://www.growyourownteachers.org/GetInvolved/GYO_BestPractices_Vision.htm
Principles of GYO Teacher Programs

- Low-income communities are places with enormous assets that can be tapped for GYO and for education of the community’s children.
- Strong and creative relationships among parents, students, community residents, paraprofessionals, teachers, administrators, community colleges, schools and school districts, higher education institutions, teacher and school employee unions and community organizations are a major source of power for quality education.
- Community organizing can mobilize these resources and bring them together to win and sustain good policy and good programs over the long haul.
- Community organizations are central to a successful Grow Your Own program by providing an independent parent/community voice at the table where decisions are made.
- Lower achieving students in lower achieving schools have a right to the best teachers with high levels of content knowledge, excellent teaching skills and good experience.
- Adult, non-traditional teaching candidates need the same elements of high quality academics and pedagogy that we hope to find exemplified in the classroom practice of those candidates once they become teachers, including teaching that engages students, respects the knowledge of students and draws on their experience.

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Principles of GYO Leadership Programs

- Co-design/co-deliver
- Professional learning communities
- Cohort of learners
- Shared leadership
  - School district mission/vision
  - University mission/vision
  - State Department of Education mission/vision
- Professional development
- Research in district
- Data from district
- Collaboration for policies
- Collaboration for resources
- Direct instructional leadership
- Social capital
- Culture of trust
- Accountability
Barriers

- Resources
- Need for collaboration among institutions
- Geography
- Mindsets
Discussion

☐ Is GYO a viable option in your community?
☐ What are the first steps?