

# To improve education, we need to support new teachers

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Aug 1, 2021



There's a common assumption that, given the time and proper resources, new teachers will grow into their roles over the first few years of their careers.

It's not that this assumption is wrong – new teachers do improve with proper training and mentoring. It's that it leaves out some important considerations.

First, many new teachers – more than two out of every five across the country – end up leaving the profession in the first five years, squandering our investment in them. This is a cost to the individual and the school district. It is also a cost to children. The children in that new teacher's class need top-quality instruction from day one. While a new third grade teacher will be able to do third grade again the next year, the students in the class only get to do third grade once.



The good news is that over the last three years we have seen immense growth in K-12 educator development in the borderland, including a new residency program in the College of Education and a \$1.4 million grant to bolster efforts to recruit, train and mentor new teachers. The residency program supports student teachers for a full year of onsite classroom teacher training and mentorship before they graduate.

These developments would not have been possible without innovative and collaborative initiatives such as the Teacher Pipeline Taskforce, which Stephanie Otero of the El Paso Community Foundation, Amy O'Rourke of the Council for Regional Economic Expansion and Educational Development (CREEED) and I launched in 2018. From the start, the support of local organizations like the Community Foundation and CREEED has been critical to our success.

K-12 educators that are ready on day one are essential if we want to dramatically increase the number of young El Pasoans receiving a higher education degree by 2030, and these organizations have provided wide-ranging, open-minded support to reach that goal.



The Community Foundation and CREEED did not just help the taskforce establish a clear vision for what improving the teacher development pipeline could look like; they also helped bring key stakeholders to the table. The taskforce has provided one of those all-too-rare spaces where all school districts, higher education leaders, employers and the nonprofit community can come together to forge local buy-in and work towards a shared vision of teacher excellence.

The taskforce has also been able to attract grants to support our work, including from national funders like the Prentice Farrar Brown & Alline Ford Brown Foundation and Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, as well as from local funders like Workforce Solutions Borderplex. Even our local school districts have committed resources to ensure that the work of the taskforce is sustained into the future.

Great teachers make an impact that resonates beyond their classrooms. Their work today prepares future generations for the important careers they will step into. We must continue to advance these initiatives for the sake of both the quality of education in our region and our children's future livelihoods.

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