

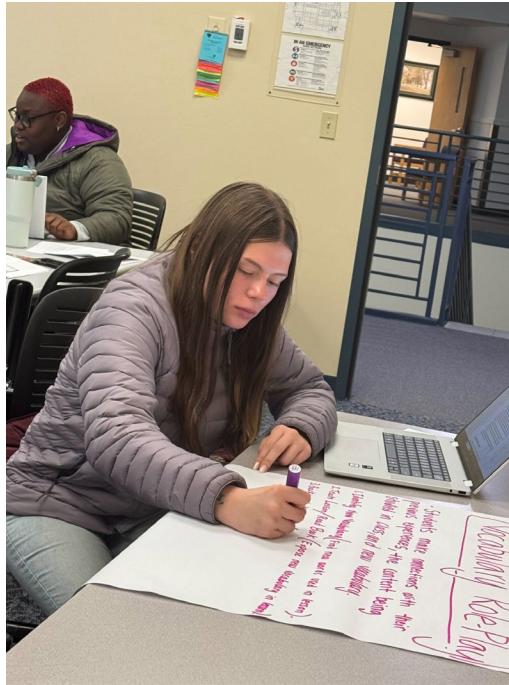
CUE Teacher Candidates Desiree Lee and Akira Shazier serve as paraprofessionals in Aurora Public Schools

CUE and Aurora Public Schools Partner to Create a Teacher Degree Apprenticeship Program

Exciting news! [Aurora Public Schools](#) has invited the UNC [Center for Urban Education](#) (CUE) to partner with them to seek approval for a [Teacher Degree Apprenticeship Program](#), which the Colorado legislature approved in 2023 with the intent of getting more teachers into classrooms. If the program is approved by the state, CUE's grow-your-own teacher preparation program will be official and allow CUE and Aurora Public Schools to access funding and resources provided by the State Apprenticeship Agency and the Department of Labor.

The Teacher Degree Apprenticeship Program requires approved organizations to provide teacher candidates with 4,500 hours of on-the-job training in a program that leads to a bachelor's degree and teacher licensure. Candidates must demonstrate progressive levels of competence, and the program must involve oversight by mentor teachers.

The CUE teacher preparation program has always had the elements of a grow-your-own teacher preparation program since 2000, when the Center was founded. CUE teacher candidates work as paraprofessionals in classrooms in the mornings and attend classes in the afternoons and evenings. Aurora Public Schools will help to document on-the-job learning in their schools and attend to the administrative elements of hiring.



CUE teacher candidate Alana Blu Cooley completes class assignment

Grow-your-own models are proven to attract a wider and more diverse talent pool and reduce turnover. They focus on elevating the skills and knowledge of aspiring teachers. National research findings indicate that 90% of apprentices continue employment after completing their apprenticeships. In turn, that creates a stronger learning environment for students.

Damon Smith, Chief of Human Resources for Aurora Public Schools, said, "We are confident that our expanded partnership with the Center for Urban Education will produce skilled teachers for our district's classrooms."

[CareerWise Colorado](#) has been essential in facilitating the partnership between CUE and the leaders of Aurora Public Schools and partnerships throughout Colorado. They believe that a modern youth apprenticeship program addresses the problem of businesses not being able to find employees with the appropriate competencies by providing the education system with an applied-learning environment for its students.

The Colorado Department of Education is committed to making good on their promise to Coloradans by supporting expanded pathways to becoming an educator. They understand that having a highly qualified teacher in every classroom is integral to students achieving their full academic potential and feeling a sense of belonging at school. CUE and Aurora Public Schools intend to support that goal by partnering to establish a strong Teacher Degree Apprenticeship Program.

Dr. Rosanne Fulton, Director of the Center for Urban Education, said, "These efforts will help us take steps toward a sustainable and strong program at our Center."



We Say Goodbye to Mentor Peggy Loader

We are so sorry to share that our dear friend and colleague, Peggy Loader, died on February 6, 2025. She worked for 34 years in the Denver Public Schools as an early childhood and elementary teacher and a central office literacy leader. Then, she served as a mentor for countless teacher candidates at our Center for the past eight years. Her wisdom and extra efforts made a big difference in the lives of so many people. What will this world do without her?

You can read more about Peggy in her [obituary](#).