



**Grow Your Own Illinois
2008 STATEWIDE LEARNING NETWORK**

Sharing Strategies & Building Relationships
November 13 - 14, 2008

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Statewide Learning Network

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Table of Contents

<i>Section</i>	<i>Page</i>
1. Introduction	2
2. Dr. Mark Warren, Plenary Speaker	3
3. Teacher Candidates: Engaging in the Process	5
4. Sharing Strategies across Consortia	8
5. Finances & More: A discussion with ISBE	12
6. Clinical & Practice Teaching Requirements	13
7. Strategies for Involving Schools and the Community in GYO	15
8. Higher Education Partners: Preparing GYO Candidates	17
9. Community Organizing Training	19

Introduction

Grow Your Own Illinois once again convened the annual Statewide Learning Network in Chicago; the 2008 gathering took place on November 13 and 14. Representatives from the sixteen statewide consortia--including teacher candidates, community organization and higher education partners--gathered to share their implementation insights and experiences. The goals of the meeting were as follows:

1. Enable mutual learning among GYO consortia
2. Build/strengthen GYO partnerships
3. Support GYO's statewide work and relationships
4. Learn from outside experts

The meeting was divided into a series of panel presentations, breakout discussions and networking opportunities. Lanita Koster, a member of the Illinois State Board of Education, provided opening remarks. The first panel featured GYO teacher candidates, as they represent the heart of GYO Illinois' work. Dr. Mark Warren's plenary speech opened the second day of the conference. All sessions were recorded, and the resulting information was compiled and synthesized into the summaries that follow.

The practices of individual consortia are included as examples. Readers are encouraged to seek out peers across the state and continue these conversations throughout the year, to build on the creativity, innovation and collaboration that are the hallmarks of GYO Illinois.

Dr. Mark Warren, Plenary

Throughout the country, community groups are struggling to find ways to effectively improve the quality of public education. Dr. Warren, assistant professor in the Graduate School of Education at Harvard University, has inventoried and studied many examples of how families and communities can meaningfully engage in the education of children. Excerpts of his remarks follow.

The economic reality of the need for a high school degree has created a sense of urgency among parents, students, and community organizations. Approximately 500 organizing groups are working in a serious way to improve the schools in their neighborhoods and communities. And Chicago is at the forefront in two aspects: involving youth and the development of the Grow Your Own model.

At one time, teachers lived in the same neighborhoods as their students. Now, they live outside the neighborhood and are likely to be of a different class and background than the children. They aren't familiar with the families and their communities; it can be compared to teaching in a foreign country. What is needed is a kind of education that connects school to communities and families. Parents don't go into schools unless there is a problem. There is a need to build relationships.

Many low-income communities have community organizations that can bring social capital. CBOs can provide the role of mediators and partners. CBOs are also catalysts for change. They build and leverage relational power. The question is whether organizing groups can build the power of families to work with schools.

The previous model was that CBO's demanded that institutions change, from the outside. But with education reform, CBO's needed a new strategy. Public schools are weak institutions. The schools need additional capacity, the social capital that parents can bring. This calls for a different organizing approach – a “deeply collaborative” approach to public schools.

The building of relationships toward common ends is at the core of organizing. Dr. Charles Payne at the University of Chicago noted: we don't lack in knowledge and solutions; the problem is that there aren't relationships of trust in schools in troubled neighborhoods. One of the best predictors of success at schools is the level of trust within school.

GYO has stepped up to this challenge by recruiting among people already connected to their neighborhood schools in some way. The teacher candidates already have relationships that they can bring. They will need to acquire the appropriate skills and knowledge through academic training, but their personal transformation into leaders is just as important.

Community organizing groups can and do work together to take on bigger issues such as school reform; GYO is doing this around the state. There are different levels of engagement, for example, safety around the school versus the quality of teaching inside. We may know how to

create safer schools, but how do we change the quality of teaching? Part of the solution is policy change, but the culture of schools must also change.

In the Bronx, schools lacked experienced teachers and retention. They created policies to attract more experienced teachers who would also provide mentoring. But the real shift occurred when they created cultural change by requiring a partnership with a community based organization to bring in parents.

In San Jose, California, a community organization developed a small schools strategy to address the problem of large, impersonal schools. The board opened three small schools in the neighborhood, schools oriented toward the community and community organizing. A collaborative of teachers and parents designed the schools. Parents said the teachers are here to support us, not the other way around. Today, the school day is begun in a way that demonstrates hard-won unity, with children, parents and teachers singing together. And the three schools are now the highest scoring schools in the district.

GYO has its origins in community organizing. It knows how to build a collaborative. Is it possible to institutionalize community organizing as part of the program? Lots of groups start with organizing, but lose it after scaling up. This model has to come from the community. This is the experiment. Will the GYO teachers be catalysts for cultural change and continue to be committed to the community?

It is impressive that several higher education institutions have joined the GYO experiment. It is hard to get them thinking about partnering. Collaboration with community groups is not the norm. Many higher education institutions have stepped up and are willing to change where we offer classes, how we work, how we do admissions. GYO's efforts in this area are impressive. This is cutting edge work and the GYO higher education partners are helping to lead.

So the question remains: Should we scale up GYO nationally? Within the American Education Research Association, people are asking about GYO. But we need to ask if it is appropriate for different locations. There has to be a meeting of GYO's good ideas and local relationships.

Teacher Candidates: Engaging in the Process

Candidates from across the state echo similar challenges and a strong feeling of commitment when asked to reflect on the GYO process. Themes of family, economic opportunities and a belief in the profound impact of education motivate these candidates, but success is never taken for granted. The following session opened the conference.

Southernmost: Brenda Miller

Peoria: Lydia Branch

Alton: Stephanie Prather

Little Village/ENLACE, Chicago: Arnulfo Nava

Auburn Gresham, Chicago: Mary Ann Peterson

Facilitator: Hina Mahmood, Cohort Coordinator, Organization of the NorthEast

➤ *How did you become involved in GYO?*

Arnulfo Nava was introduced to GYO through community work on gang and violence prevention with Little Village Community Development Corporation [now ENLACE]. He believes the key is to be a mentor to youth before they are in trouble.

Stephanie Prather's daughter was doing research on the number of minority students and teachers in district, and found how few minority teachers there were. Stephanie wanted to be a part of the solution, so she decided to go back to school to become a teacher.

Brenda Miller earned a paraprofessional degree to work in the school while her daughter was in pre-k, and then worked in the regional office. Others encouraged her to become teacher but she couldn't afford it; connecting with GYO made that dream a possibility.

Mary Ann Peterson witnessed the high rates of teacher turnover in Auburn Gresham schools. It became apparent why kids were having problems, and that made her want to become a teacher in her own community.

[Editor's note: Lydia Branch joined the panel mid-session.]

➤ *What are the benefits and challenges of being part of GYO?*

Benefits

- Having a cohort to help you through the process, and having the option to take the Basic Skills test more than once. People are right there -- lots of mentors.
- Financial benefits, computers made available. Have people to contact with problems or questions. Everyone has been really helpful.
- Tuition is covered! Developing personal and professional relationships. Able to draw on skills and talents of others. Cohort is a real benefit. Cohort coordinators are very helpful with academic and personal support. Need help to keep up grades and not get discouraged.
- Single mother, working full time, has two kids who are very active in school, and she goes to all of their events. Usually take 4 – 5 classes at a time and still has time for family.
- Kids are very active and doing well in school. At college, have lots of professors of color which makes a huge difference.
- Being able to go to school and have the tuition covered is an enormous blessing.

Challenges

- The length of time it takes to finish the program
 - Hard to find time to make all the meetings; biggest challenge is finding the time
 - Balance of work, family and education
 - Homework
- ***How does GYO affect the work you do in the community?***
- Understanding what the GYO program was created for helps her understand the children in the classroom. Can't just think, "This child has behavior problems," but must look at them more positively.
 - Now that he is back in school pursuing a BA, the youth he works with are encouraged to go on to college.
 - Observation hours at the schools make her more familiar with teaching staff.
- ***What special qualities will help you be a great teacher?***
- Being a male teacher
 - Works with children and listens to them without judgment
 - Knows how to nurture the children. She is patient and understands the children.
 - Has a greater relationship in the community to draw on, and is receiving the book knowledge to go with her community skills.
 - Commitment to stay: I won't leave. I know what their parents have gone through.
- ***What is your major?***
- Special education. While working in the community, he had to do a workshop with students. The principal asked him to do it in special education classroom. He felt bad for the kids and knows it isn't easy for them to be left out. Felt compelled to reach this population.
 - Elementary education: want to instill self-confidence and self-worth in the children, before they get too old.
 - Special education: seems to be her calling. They are the ones who really need you. Their faces light up when you really communicate with them.
 - K-3: when she started the GYO program at TARGET, wanted to be sure the children learned to read and could pass the ISAT.
 - Wants to work in an alternative school, a special education high school. Wants to really challenge the youth and make them think outside of the box. She has had two of her special education kids go to college.
- ***Do you identify yourself as a leader in your community?***
- Yes, I see myself as a leader and as an example -- and as a follower, following other individuals' examples of how they have impacted their society. It takes a good follower to be a good leader.
 - A leader in GYO, and a follower in the community. Still have a lot to learn. Not everything works for every student.
- ***Family and college***
- Arnulfo has three young children. He tells his family that all of his success is "their" success, because of the support of his family.

- One student has a mandatory date day with her daughter regularly, when they get their nails done or go to the bookstore.
- Instructors are willing to be lenient and flexible. Kids come first. But you have to take care of your business because school is really important.

➤ ***Support systems***

- “There is grandma!” Husband works very different schedule and mother fills in. And there’s always negotiation—sometimes you have to leave class a little early.
- Before you get into GYO, speak with people you trust, who care for your kids, and identify the help you need. Can get impatient and take 3 or 4 classes at a time, but that might be too much. Situation is difficult, but not impossible. Be realistic with yourself.
- Think more broadly about GYO than just my own experience. My dropping out might negatively impact the funding of the program and the rest of the cohort.
- Sometimes you just have to close the book. Have to figure out what is the best time for studying and try to adjust your life to make it work.

➤ ***What would you add to your program?***

- Add minority mentors
- Have been a senior for 3 ½ years. Starting student teaching in the spring and concerned about losing salary [*GYO teachers can be paid for student teaching*]

Sharing Strategies across Consortia

Four groups of participants discussed the same topics concurrently. While the format was designed to surface effective solutions, the facilitators also encouraged participants to identify challenges and approaches that didn't work. The following summarizes the suggestions and concerns across the four discussion groups.

COHORT EVOLUTION

Building relationships of trust in and out of the classroom

Social activities, including parties, group outings to theater productions, dinners, barbeque picnics including family members, and bowling nights all provide opportunities for candidates to get to know one another and build relationships. It is recommended that students choose the types of activities.

For challenging situations and to build trust, TARGET provides a suggestion box where candidates can post an unlimited number of comments to express their opinions about what's going on.

The ENLACE and Kenwood Oakland Community Organization cohort meets together every other month, and separately in between. They are intentionally building partnerships between two communities that share struggles, Latino and African American. Honesty and respect are priorities. Other cohorts voiced an interest in creating a space to talk specifically about differences of race and ethnicity and to learn from one another. This is perceived to be an important aspect of teacher preparation.

Managing candidates at different academic levels

While most cohorts rely on tutoring and mentoring to address needs at different levels, several had suggestions for actively engaging candidates whose paths seldom cross:

The candidates at Youth Connection Charter School are no longer taking classes together, so they have monthly meetings and an expert presentation several times a year. Recently, a community partner facilitated a conversation titled, "Who is taking care of the caretakers?" That facilitator is under contract to figure out what people need to succeed and make sure those needs are addressed—soft skills as well as academic.

At Springfield, many candidates work for the Urban League, their community partner, or the Springfield school district. Some of them job-share and travel together, so support for one another reaches beyond the classroom. Urban League makes sure that GYO candidates can have time off for GYO events.

Logan Square Neighborhood Association hosts a retreat every year before classes start. They also have contracted with a social worker who can provide support for personal issues. Candidates and tutors schedule hours at a local restaurant, and if that doesn't work, they find a convenient time for tutoring.

The Organization of the NorthEast created a math seminar over the summer. Almost all the candidates have a challenge around math. The candidates who are the best at math are now tutoring the other candidates. They have divided themselves into cohorts-within-cohorts, based on their math levels.

Rockford expressed a desire to increase outside activities as a way to create opportunities for bonding beyond the classroom.

Integrating new candidates

Most of the consortia have waiting lists. Funding is an obstacle to starting new candidates.

At the Organization of the NorthEast, the cohort coordinator did one-on-one relational meetings with each candidate. When they brought in new candidates, the existing GYO candidates did one-on-ones with the new ones. They've found the best candidates by recruiting among people with whom they already have relationships.

Springfield integrates new candidates at the beginning of the semester. They do an orientation and introduce them to the rest of the cohort. Springfield is a small community and many people already know each other and have been referred by one of the existing candidates.

BASIC SKILLS TEST

The following strategies for taking the Basic Skills test (125 questions plus writing), were suggested by one candidate:

- Test takers have five hours. Determine where your strengths are and do that part first. Break the test up and move back and forth among the sections. Do the part you are worried about first.
- Use time management to figure out how to spend the time; pace yourself
- Take water and snacks
- Know how many answers must be correct and prioritize
- There are formulas for the math at the front of the test, so there is no need to memorize them
- Don't study for the test the night before.
- Don't take your cell phone. If it rings, your test is null and void
- Figure out when to take the test related to other tests and events in your personal life

Basic Skills Test preparation examples:

Johnny (East St. Louis) stressed the importance of doing what makes you feel comfortable and following the coaching: "the test favors you if you are prepared."

Youth Connection Charter School requires all candidates to take the test no later than January, because they found that candidates are scared to take the test.

Alton discovered that the practice test online is almost verbatim to the actual test. Teacher candidate Stephanie talked to a few people in advance who coached her. She knew she had to get at least 13 math questions right. She moved back and forth among part of the tests, rather than going straight through.

Springfield gives candidates a binder with the practice test. They may also register the candidates for the test so they will take it together. They provide math tutors, but reported that it is hard to get consistent preparation time. Candidates have been pretty successful in passing the Basic Skills test the first time. Candidates who don't have GPA at a certain level have mandatory tutoring. Try to be pro-active and catch problems in advance.

Logan Square offers three workshops and candidates must attend at least two of them to prepare for the test. The academic advisor at Chicago State runs the workshops.

Challenge: Multiple failures

Rockford expressed concern about someone failing the test multiple times. If a person is limited to taking electives because they can't pass the Basic Skills test, should they leave the program and free up space and money for another candidate?

Southernmost reported that two candidates dropped out because they didn't pass.

Careful screening can help identify candidates not likely to pass. In addition, consortia suggested the following:

LSNA, Chicago State: Candidates have to take the Basic Skills test after they complete Math for Teachers I. If they don't pass, they take the class again. The fear becomes debilitating; they have found it is best for students to take it right away. One candidate put it off for four years, and created so much anxiety. "You need to take it or else."

TARGET: Requires candidates to take English and both Math classes, and then take the Basic Skills test. The math teacher works on skills appropriate for the test.

In addition, provide practice tests to candidates. Two formats are available: online with diagnostic and the ICTS workbook. Bring in someone to give test-taking strategies and preparation. Keep up study groups after Basic Skills because there are more qualifying exams.

COHORT SUPPORT SYSTEMS

Child Care

Suggestions included paying for childcare regardless of who is providing it (family or other provider), and/or providing a stipend per class for child care, which does not offset total cost but does help--and it eliminates a lot of paper work.

Examples:

- Springfield hired child care assistants, but it was too complicated because of scheduling conflicts. Then began reimbursing for child care. Finally decided to bring in other community resources to assist students.
- Southernmost reimburses for child care
- Alton noted that students were not bringing children to child care after the school gave facilities to provide child care, and asked how others reimbursed for private child care
- TARGET has child care providers, two full time and two part time
- LSNA has child care people on site; the student is reimbursed only for non-potty-trained children

Challenges:

Making sure everyone turns in forms for reimbursement in a timely manner. When they are teaching, they will have requirements for turning in lessons plans on time; this is preparing for professionalism.

Cost of caring for a special needs child. Costs \$35 a day, even if only 1.5 hours, or \$900 a month, which was very expensive. Consortium usually pays \$7 an hour. The Division of Children and Specialized Services can do an assessment and approve for certain numbers of hours a month.

Transportation

- Transportation is becoming more complicated at TARGET because of the number of students who are taking classes at the University. They purchase two parking passes and have students meet on site to car pool.
- For Southernmost, it is difficult to car pool because there is no public transportation to meet at one site. They pay mileage and students get one check at the end of the semester. The stipend is predetermined at the beginning of the semester
- ENLACE Chicago issues bus passes; Peoria does not deal with transportation at all
- In East St. Louis, the community college and the local train station have an agreement for \$5 passes for the entire semester

Tutoring

All consortia provide tutoring, though some have developed workshops for groups of students. These may focus on a specific skill such as language or writing, or preparing for the Basic Skills test.

Other supports

- ENLACE Chicago provides financial support to some GYO candidates who can work with students in the schools as parent mentors, tutors, etc.
- TARGET Area provides cohort building activities to get to know coordinator and other candidates, going bowling, picnics, etc.
- LSNA is contracting with a social worker because of the stress that can come with starting school again after so many years and for the other things that tend to happen in the lives of non-traditional students. It is provided on an as-needed basis.
- Southernmost has talked about the need for case management for individuals who have to balance a lot of things in their lives.

CONSORTIUM RELATIONSHIPS: SUPPORTING CANDIDATE SUCCESS

Higher education partners, schools/districts and community organizations each contribute to candidates' success. Participants provided the following examples:

Chicago State University brings a history of flexibility to GYO Illinois. Their candidates don't go to the main campus; rather, Chicago State brings classes to community schools. Once CSU teachers teach GYO candidates, they want to teach GYO students again. They fall in love with the students. That makes it easier for CSU to develop a community-based curriculum. Teachers get regular pay; GYO reimburses travel for faculty members because they come to neighborhood.

Alton district has committed to hiring graduates in the district. Once they are certified in that area, they will be hired. The superintendent sits on consortium.

Several community organizations have raised funds to purchase laptop computers for candidates.

Finances & More: A discussion with ISBE

This session ran twice and featured Linda Jamali, Division Administrator, Teacher Certification, ISBE, and Deb Stephens, Principal Education Consultant, ISBE. Deb Stephens provided an overview of GYO financial issues. The GYO law, state grant procedures, and the FRIS process specify a variety of conditions and requirements that all consortia must understand and follow. Deb Stephens and Steve Andrews (GYO Illinois) both indicated their availability and willingness to provide individualized support upon request.

Session participants reviewed key documents, including the Administrative Code that details GYO Illinois; certifications, assurances and standard terms of the grant; and ISBE state and federal grant administration policy. Significant attention was given to understanding the differences between supplanting and supplementing – and therefore determining which expenditures were appropriate for GYO funding. For the most part this issue was well understood by participants, though there was some question about the level of documentation required to defend borderline expenditures:

1. In one group the following scenario was posed: A university wants to hire an adjunct professor on a contract basis to teach a particular GYO class which does not have the minimum students enrolled to justify being a part of the load of a regular faculty member. The course will not be offered unless it is taught by an adjunct, because of cost factors, so some students will be delayed as they move towards graduation. But the university wants GYO to pay that instructor's contractual fee, while still collecting tuition from GYO students. It is unlikely that ISBE would cover such an expense.
2. Another question had to do with whether stipends can be paid to employees for work on GYO. In general, faculty members can receive stipends for work beyond their defined work load. But salaried employees of partner institutions with a regular weekly schedule should not receive a stipend for work performed during their regular work day. (If a substitute needs to be hired so that the institution can release the employee to work specifically on GYO, the cost of hiring that substitute can be covered.)
3. Participants also talked about whether the program could pay rent to a partner organization for the use of a particular space by another partner - space that would otherwise be vacant – e.g. whether the grant could pay for the University to offer classes in one of the buildings of the Community College. Ms. Stephens' initial assessment is that this should not happen.

In addition, the following issues were explored:

- There is some interest in adding some reporting capabilities to the automation already introduced into the budgeting spreadsheet. Practical solutions were not discussed, however, since they were only of interest to a few people.
- Ms. Stephens did stress that fiscal reports can be sent at any time, for instance, monthly.
- Stipends for students during their student teaching: there does not appear to be a legal barrier to using state funds in this way. The cost of such stipends may become very large, however, as more candidates near graduation. For current school employees, one strategy is to use

grant funds to pay the school district to hire a substitute so that candidates can be maintained on their benefits and seniority track.

- Finally, there is no good news to report about when money will start to flow from the Comptroller. At this point bills are being delayed approximately 5 months.

Clinical & Practice Teaching Requirements

For GYO Illinois teacher candidates, clinical and field requirements raise concerns about location, economic impact and family considerations. During this session, higher education partners shared suggestions, while candidates and coordinators explored practical challenges.

The purpose of clinical and field requirements is to spend time in actual classrooms to observe student/teacher interactions and to practice teaching methods. The experience gives students a chance to demonstrate their skills under the watchful eye of master teachers. Professional teaching standards and professional associations require students to demonstrate that they are effective teachers.

Western Illinois University, for example, has four fieldwork experiences that precede student teaching. Teacher candidates observe teaching, create a teaching unit, assess learning, and evaluate their own performance. Field work goes along with an ISBE certified methods course. WIU requires a certain number of hours in classroom over 12 – 16 weeks. In fieldwork and student teaching there is necessarily a limit on extracurricular and full-time jobs

Participants discussed student placement: if a candidate is working in a school, can they do their field work in that school? There was a difference of opinion, with most preferring that candidates not be placed in the schools where they work, because this should be an opportunity for a new or different experience. One accrediting requirement is diversity and depth of experiences. In addition, there could be a conflict of interest or the student could be perceived as getting something more than others.

Others disagreed, asserting that student teaching for GYO should be in one's own community, as that is the premise of GYO Illinois. Candidates should also get a diversity of experience, but the student teaching should be in the community because candidates should be effective teachers in their own communities.

Participants raised the following practical questions regarding GYO Student Teaching (*answers in parenthesis were added after the meeting*):

1. What does the law say about paying GYO for student teaching? (*GYO student teachers can be paid*)
2. Could the funds come out of the GYO grant? (*yes*)
3. Could it cover health care as well as salary? (*the law says "pay participants"; does not speak to salary versus health care*)

Health insurance continues to be a concern, not only for the candidates themselves but also for family members if they are the primary provider. It can be covered by the higher education partner if candidate is a full time student, but is student teaching always considered full time?

Are there limits to signing up for insurance? Could GYO be a “group” to cover health insurance for candidates while they are student teaching? AllKids/KidCare is available through the State of Illinois, though there is income-eligibility.

As for childcare, Action for Children will cover childcare if caregiver will sign up as a provider. It covers people who are in school or work.

Ideas that surfaced concerning pay during student teaching included:

- School district should pay because candidates are their future employees
- Get local businesses or churches to adopt a candidate during their student teaching time
- Financial planning workshop for candidates, helping them pre-plan for expenses during student teaching
- Save the FAFSA money that is in addition to their tuition and put it aside for student teaching
- Universities: might it be possible that candidates student teach part-time and work part-time across a year rather than intensive full-time student teaching
- University: business school could offer a practicum and the business student could take the job of the GYO candidate while s/he is student teaching
- Candidates who work for school districts save their vacation days and/or sick leave to cover their student teaching

Finally, one participant asked how a school might replace a paraprofessional when he/she is rotated out to receive a diverse experience.

Strategies for Involving Schools and the Community in GYO

Cohort coordinators Hina Mahmood (Organization of the Northeast) and Katya Nuques (ENLACE Chicago) facilitated a lively and interactive session designed to surface ways that each consortia could initiate and strengthen relationships with their schools and communities.

The GYO model features close relationships between teacher candidates and their local schools and their surrounding communities. But these relationships don't happen by accident. Consortia can build and support those relationships with ongoing communication, intentional collaboration, and meaningful programs. In this session, participants shared successful techniques and brainstormed additional approaches.

How and why do we increase awareness of GYO among the overall community, and how can GYO students increase their participation in community life?

Participants identified specific strategies to increase awareness in general, such as participating in:

- Back to school events
- Parent mentoring
- Monthly forum organized by the CBO
- Parades (Bud Billiken in Chicago)
- Meetings with principals
- Local School Councils/PAC Council

In addition, information about GYO can be disseminated via:

- Church announcements
- Contact with local officials; get on their radar as a solution to the problems we're having
- Public Service Announcements and public access cable television
- Media outreach: when something positive happens, get the word out

The recruitment process can also be an effective means to spread the word about GYO, though it should be targeted and local. Logan Square shared that Univision (television) ran announcements about their recruitment, but that was too broad and attracted too many ineligible potential candidates. Announcements and recruitment through churches, community centers, and local schools proved to be optimal.

Examples from the field: How can we increase GYO candidates' involvement in schools?

Schools aren't always good at welcoming outside agencies. The first step in building a relationship, all agreed, is to ask the principal where s/he needs support. Community-based organizations may also offer to do an assessment to identify needs. Teacher candidates can then be integrated where needed, and where they express interest and commitment. But be sure to follow through and provide something effective and worthwhile. Consistency is essential.

Certainly, many candidates were involved in the schools as volunteers, tutors and paraprofessionals prior to GYO and should be encouraged to continue those activities. Observation hours and clinical placements further school involvement, while fulfilling academic requirements.

In addition, consortia have found success initiating and developing the following:

- After-school programs and tutoring
- Translation services -- report card pick-up day, for teachers and parents
- Parent educator/parent coordinator
- Volunteering in summer school programs/creating a summer "camp"
- Tutoring a specific topic
- Assisting with science fairs, football games, mentorships and other activities

In short, if you're a parent, a candidate or a community-based organization, there should be a relationship with the principal. If not, build the relationship. Pay visits to principals in a scheduled way. Communicate the idea that you want to be a teacher and/or a partner. Make yourself available and visible share your dream with others!

Why do we need school districts and local administrations to make a commitment to GYO candidates and how can they be more aware of challenges and successes facing students?

Participants want districts to commit to participating in GYO -- from including candidates in the schools to hiring graduates -- in order to provide stability and reasonable expectations. A South Suburban candidate shared that her cohort visited another district for its monthly meeting, and an administrator at the other district announced that GYO students were guaranteed a position in her district. The candidate's district, by contract, has not expressed a similar intent.

District buy-in is also important in the context of unions, where the last hired are usually the first fired. . Administrators might have to step in for a candidate to keep her position so that the loan can be forgiven. On the other hand, a new principal might have to take on candidates that s/he didn't chose. There may be a teacher that simply doesn't fit, or has bad evaluations; this should be pro-actively addressed, not figured out after it happens.

How can principals increase their involvement in GYO and become critical consortium partners?

Participants suggested that principals could engage in the following activities:

- Recognize candidates and parent volunteers at award ceremonies
- Make GYO an agenda item at district level principals meetings
- Invite GYO candidates to their meetings; candidates can give their personal testimony
- Purchase books about teaching/education for GYO candidates to read and use
- Count candidates' coursework as part of CPDU credit

- Attend GYO consortium activity outside the school
- On school improvement days, have GYO candidates give informative presentation
- Distribute a newsletter to introduce GYO candidates to the school/building
- Host “Meet the GYO Student” workshops
- Welcome GYO meetings in their building

Higher Education Partners: Preparing GYO Candidates

Three higher education partners offered candid observations on the GYO Illinois model and the rewards and challenges of collaboration. While they and their schools are committed to GYO’s success, they are operating in large institutions with constraints and limitations.

Dr. Maureen Gillette, Dean, College of Education Northeastern Illinois University (NEIU)

The idea of collaboration is central to GYO. We need to talk to each other, challenge each other, improve the quality of the work we do. The NEIU mission is to do programs like GYO. Dr. Gillette invited participants to consider exactly what it means to help teachers be agents of change, to “deeply” collaborate. We need to think critically about what it means to operate as a consortium, to be a part of GYO Illinois. GYO holds so much promise to change teacher education, but if consortia were present without all partners, that presents an obstacle to collaboration. Not many people are doing this kind of work. We have so much to learn from each other. It’s a rocky road to collaboration, but this work with GYO is the most satisfying work she has ever done.

Mark Larson, Assistant Professor, Secondary Education, Director of Partnerships National-Louis University (NLU)

Students are not yet at NLU. But much effort has already been invested in building relationships. GYO is new to NLU. Universities are big institutions and can be hard to change. Can’t yet build a cohort because only three students are ready, and NLU can’t meet them at their location with only three students. The university is a big machine and has lots of parts that need to change. We need to be honest about limitations; honesty is important to collaboration. Creating a consortium is like building a web, it is about creating mutual understandings. The cohort model fits GYO beautifully, and National-Louis University is willing to build a program around students and the community.

Dr. Rori Carson, Assistant Dean for Undergraduate and Teacher Education Western Illinois University (WIU)

GYO has been a life-altering experience for all involved, but it has not been easy. Numerous challenges have been surmounted; we have to have people dedicated to change, willing to accept and adapt and examine their own beliefs and assumptions. Planning grants allow for the building of relationships, and GYO needs time to build relationships – and to make certain candidates know what they’re getting into. In the course of the grant we had a complete change of leadership at all partners. But the consortium survived and continues to grow. This demonstrated the importance of collaborative relationships. The consortium meets regularly at

all-day events. They've confronted institutional barriers, such as the need to have 10 people in a class in order to offer it, and funds going to the central fund, not the department working with GYO. If we didn't have key people who believed in collaboration, this wouldn't still be going. They have sacrificed personal time and money in order to support GYO. That demonstrates the importance of transformation and the ability of organizations to band together. It's because of the power of the candidates as individuals who are going to impact the schools. Certainly they will make an impact on students and communities, but they really have the ability to make an impact on the institutions.

Dr. Gillette reflected on the challenge of collaboration, observing that we know when we are collaborating because we know what it feels like when we aren't. Part of the challenge of collaboration is gaining clarity on what you are doing and why you are doing it. So Dr. Gillette and Brian Schultz drafted a theoretical framework for teachers at Northeastern. They explored historical notions of race uplift, caring, other mothering, critical pedagogy and race theory. We need to think about what we believe, and ask if we are in agreement -- and faculty need to buy into this. They are working on another article on GYO curriculum development. Dr. Gillette recommended putting down on paper the trials and tribulations of what we're doing, advising that we need to work on this before we have a national spotlight.

Participants offered several comments and suggestions:

Deep collaboration will occur when we add certain elements to the training of teachers, specifically cultural competency – like doctors learning bedside manner.

One participant voiced concern about the role of the higher education partner within the consortium and voiced a concern that they were silenced as a partner, or taken for granted. Their commitment is no less than any of the other partners. Colleges are making sacrifices to meet the needs of GYO.

Another participant reflected on the concept of deep collaboration. She acknowledged that without the strong influence of community organizing groups, higher education wouldn't be able to do this. She suggested that we need to build on what community organizations have been able to do, in order to help higher education institutions overcome barriers. Faculty members need to publish, and need the time to do that -- and community organizations need to understand that reality. We all need to talk about curriculum development, and work together to take the next step. 'Not easy' is not a bad thing. The institution is a machine and we need your voices to remind us of the humanity side. Deep collaboration will happen when we change each other.

Teacher education is not equally valued at each higher education institution, although most mission statements talk about supporting the community. The way to do that is through partnership with community organizations.

Dr. Gillette concluded the session by inviting all present to envision what it would look like if everyone were deeply collaborating to prepare the best teachers possible.

Community Organizing Training

The GYO Illinois law was created through a grassroots organizing effort, and elements of community organizing are both featured in the law and throughout the GYO model. This session provided an introduction to the community organizing concepts of power and relational meetings.

Community organizing is essential to GYO and the growing of a thousand new teachers across Illinois because this effort is transformational. It changes individuals and transforms schools by utilizing a method that is proven successful. Community organizing involves the development of trusting relationships and a clear analysis of power. GYO is about the flexing of people power: it was created by engaging in the political process, and continues to be funded because it has engaged in public advocacy. Last year, GYO won a half-million dollar increase in appropriations while the state budget faced considerable cuts.

We have to know how community organizers think in order to become more successful in the process. Organizing concepts include self-interest, relationships and power. A power analysis is a tool that enables us to identify true decision-makers, assess allies and potential allies, and understand the opposition. Combined, community organizing methods allow us to construct the equation for quality education for children.

Participants divided into three smaller groups to experience the Melian Debate, understand the concept of people power, and explore the dynamics of relational meetings.

The Melian Debate

Thucydides' "The Melian Debate" from Ancient Greece is a story in the form of a dialogue. It is used by organizers to help people experience power and powerlessness. The debate narrates the positions of the Melians, residents of the island of Melos, who argue for justice and law and the right to remain neutral. The Athenians, eager to have power over the island of Melos, aren't interested in rights or justice, only the strength of the Athenian military to subjugate the Melians.

Participants were divided into two groups, one being assigned the role of Melians, and the other the role of the Athenians. They were then invited to continue the debate. While the room eventually descended into chaos, the self interests of the two sides became even clearer, as did the fact that arguing about "rights" in the face of brute force power was ineffective. In a debriefing, organizers encouraged the participants to consider their own feelings about being powerful and powerless, and why it may be useful for those seeking to further their own interests to take collective action.

Understanding Power

The facilitator of this session began by asking the participants to define power. The participants suggested:

- Influence over others
- Ability to exert force over inertia, results in movement, motion
- The ability to move people or things
- Control of resources, money
- Authority
- Requires self esteem
- Knowledge, information

The session facilitator reflected on the Spanish “*poder.*” It means “to be able”, we can, to have the ability. Power itself is neither good nor bad; rather, it depends on the situation and how it is used. When participants were asked to identify people who are powerful, participants named Barack Obama, Warren Buffett, T. Boone Pickett, Oprah, George Bush, Bill Gates, Mayor Daley, The Pope, Donald Trump and Mother Theresa. All have money or access to money, are famous, may have vision, some are political figures, leaders, parents; all have a stage/platform; most are men, white.

The group then discussed sources of power, including money, events & circumstances. Money can buy influence; strategic money is powerful. Circumstances can inform perceptions of power -- sometimes if you are perceived to be powerful, you are.

Participants identified two forms of power:

1. Strategic use of money
2. Organized people

Through a subtle but thought-provoking game, participants were then challenged to “take” the power to demonstrate the fact that power is not ceded without demand.

Relational Meetings/Self Interest

The two facilitators in this session began by cautioning that in the name of the task, we tend to forget about relationship. Organizing is focused on the building of relationships and understanding people’s self-interests, and on the development of trust that allows us to act together. One-on-one meetings, also known as relational meetings, are used to identify self-interest through the sharing of our stories.

We build trust by getting to know one another, by telling our stories. In a relational meeting, we are seeking to listen hard to another person. We listen for self interest, for what motivates the person with whom we are speaking, what they care about, who they are.

In relational meetings, it is ok to probe, but not to pry! There is an important difference between the personal and the private. One-on-ones welcome the personal, but are not about the private. Don’t ask a question you wouldn’t feel comfortable answering.

Two participants volunteered to role-play a relational meeting. When they begin their conversation, they jump right into the task and neglect to have a conversation about who they

are. Participants reflect on the need to be deliberate about asking questions and letting the other person know that you are interested in learning about what matters to him/her. They try again, and this time they begin to share their own experiences and the values that motivate their work.