2026-2027 Grow Your Own Educator Fund recipients

Growing New Classroom Teachers: 7 Educators

Name	Current employee of:	Current Position	Certification or Degree funded by Grow Your Own	Funding allows this teacher to:
Andrew Pontbriand	North Routt Community Charter School	Middle School Teacher	Alternative Teaching Licensure	Andrew is in his first year of teaching in a public school. Completing the alternative licensure program is a requirement for continued employment in this role.
Bailey Wade	Hayden School District: Hayden Valley Elementary School	Paraprofessional	Bachelors of Science in Elementary Education	Completing this degree will allow Bailey to be eligible for employment as an elementary school teacher.
Dustin Hartmann	Steamboat Springs School District: Sleeping Giant School	Paraprofessional	Masters in Elementary Curriculum and Elementary Teaching Certification	Completing this degree will allow Dustin to be eligible for employment as an elementary school teacher.
Naomi Barker	South Routt School District: South Routt Elementary	2nd Grade Teacher	Masters in Literacy	Completing this degree ensures the small rural district has highly qualified instruction.
Sequoya Bertron	Steamboat Springs School District: Strawberry Park Elementary	Daily Building Substitute	Bachelors in Elementary Education	Completing this degree will allow Sequoya to be eligible for employment as an elementary classroom teacher.
Kellen Kurtz	Steamboat Springs School District: Soda Creek Elementary	Office Manager	Masters in Culturally Diverse Learning & Education	Completing this degree will allow Kellen to be eligible for employment as a Classroom Teacher or working in the SSSD culturally and linguistically diverse program.
Maria Klein	Steamboat Springs School District: Soda Creek Elementary	Biliteracy Teacher	Alternative Teaching Licensure	Maria is in her first year of teaching multilingual students after working at Soda Creek Elementary as a paraprofessional. She is a native Spanish speaker. Completing this licensure program is a requirement for continued employment in this role.

Growing New Mental Health Staff: 6 School Counselors/Social Workers

Name	Current employee of:	Current job	Certification or Degree funded by Grow Your Own	Funding allows this teacher to:
Angie Teters	Steamboat Springs School District: Steamboat Springs High School	Substance Abuse Prevention Coordinator	Master of Science Dual Degree in Clinical Mental Health Counseling and School Counseling	Angie is in her second year as the District's Substance Abuse Prevention Coordinator. Completing the school counseling degree is a requirement for Angie's continued employment in this role.
Anna Allsberry	Steamboat Springs School District: Steamboat Springs High School	School Counselor	Master of Science (School Counseling) & Master of Science (Clinical Mental Health Counseling)	Anna is in her second year as a School Counselor. Completing the school counseling degree is a requirement for Anna's continued employment in this role.
Brenna Ciesco	Hayden School District: All Schools	School Social Worker	Master of Science, Social Work	Brenna is in her third year as a School Social Worker. Completing the school social work degree is a requirement for Brenna's continued employment in this role.
Brianne Haagenson	North Routt Community Charter School	School Counselor	Master of Arts, School Counseling	Brianne is in her first year as a School Counselor after completing her practicum at Steamboat Springs Middle School. Completing the school counseling degree is a requirement for Brianne's continued employment in this role.
Nicole Hickory	Steamboat Springs School District: Sleeping Giant School	School Social Worker	Master of Social Work	Nicole is in her first year as a School Social Worker after completing her internship at Soda Creek Elementary. Completing the school social work degree is a requirement for Nicole's continued employment in this role.
Scott Przymus	Steamboat Springs School District: Steamboat Springs High School	School Counselor	Masters in School Counseling	Scott is in his third year as a School Counselor. Completing the school counseling degree is a requirement for Scott's continued employment in this role.

Growing New Special Education Teachers: 4 Educators

Name	Current employee of:	Current job	Certification or Degree funded by Grow Your Own	Funding allows this teacher to:
Amanda Gordon	Steamboat Springs School District: Soda Creek Elementary School	Autism Teacher	Ed.S. – Dual Principal and Administrator Licensure Concentration	Completing the dual degrees will allow Amanda to be eligible for employment in a district-level Special Education leadership position or as a school principal in the future.

Katie McElhinney	Steamboat Springs School District: Strawberry Park Elementary	Special Education Teacher	Alternative Licensure Program for Special Education Generalist Licensure	Katie is in her first year as a Special Education Teacher after working as a paraprofessional at Strawberry Park Elementary and as a classroom teacher at South Routt Elementary. Completing the Special Education licensure program is a requirement for Katie's continued employment in this role.
Mariah Starbuck	Steamboat Springs School District: Steamboat Springs Middle School	Special Education Teacher	Special Education Generalist Alternative Teaching Licensure	Mariah is in her first year as a Special Education Teacher after working as a paraprofessional at Steamboat Springs Middle School. Completing this licensure program is a requirement for Mariah's continued employment in this role.
Susan Kipfer	Steamboat Springs School District: Steamboat Springs Middle School	Special Education Teacher	Special Education Generalist Alternative Teaching Licensure	Susan is in her first year as a Special Education Teacher. Completing this licensure program is a requirement for Susan's continued employment in this role.

Growing New Gifted Education Teachers: 1 Educator

Name	Current employee of:	Current job	Certification or Degree funded by Grow Your Own	Funding allows this teacher to:
Jennifer Hard	Steamboat Springs School District: Strawberry Park Elementary	4th Grade Teacher	Master of Science in Education in Gifted, Talented and Creative	Completing the Gifted Education endorsement will allow Jennifer to be eligible for employment as a Gifted Education teacher.

Growing New Credentialed Teachers to Offer College-Level Course Offerings: 2 Educators

Name	Current employee of:	Current job	Certification or Degree funded by Grow Your Own	Funding allows this teacher to:
Bailey Iacovetto	South Routt School District: Soroco High School/Middle School	Agriculture Teacher	Master of Science in Agricultural Education and Agriculture Communications	Completing the required credentials will allow Bailey to teach college-level concurrent enrollment and CTE agriculture and welding classes through Colorado Northwest Community College or Colorado Mountain College in addition to Career and Technical Education classes.
John Cleland	Steamboat Springs School District: Steamboat Springs High School	English Teacher	Masters of English	Completing the required credentials will allow John to teach college-level concurrent enrollment English classes through Colorado Mountain College.

Growing New Preschool Teachers: 7 Preschool Teachers

Name	Current employee of:	Current position:	Certification or Degree funded by Grow Your Own	Funding allows this teacher to:
Corrina Schliske, Hannah Gooding, Kate Decker, Katie Hunt, Maria Kearns, Sarah McPhee	Steamboat Montessori	Assistant Preschool Teachers	Colorado Shines Professional Development Information System coursework including Preventing and Responding to Child Abuse and Neglect, Introduction to Early Intervention and Preschool Special Education Programs, and Recognizing the Impact of Bias on Early Childhood Professionals	Preschool coursework was completed during the summer, ensuring six newly hired assistant preschool teachers had these foundational trainings in place and were ready to welcome students on the first day of school.
Franki Story	Steamboat Springs School District: Soda Creek Elementary	Lead Preschool Teacher	Bachelor of Science in Early Childhood Studies	Completing a Bachelor's degree in early childhood education is best practice for Lead Preschool Teachers to provide high quality preschool instruction.