

Recruiting and Supporting Bilingual Educators



Problem Overview

The Teacher Vacancy Grant Pilot Program provides a significant opportunity for Local Education Agencies (LEAs) to address their current staffing challenges while strengthening their long-term teacher pipeline. LEAs can use the available funds to create high-retention pathways to address staffing challenges at the district level or develop equitable access strategies aimed at specific district schools.

Growing linguistically diverse educators is one way that LEAs effectively achieve these objectives. The strategies are based on best practices, research, and experiences from successful programs nationwide. Implementing these strategies can enable LEAs to create sustainable solutions that not only tackle their immediate staffing challenges but also support their long-term teacher pipeline.

Strategy Summary

There are specific target populations to consider when looking to grow linguistically diverse educators:

- High schoolers who are pursuing or have earned the Illinois State Seal of Biliteracy in a language other than English.
- Linguistically diverse paraprofessionals.
- Community members and career changers who speak the same language as students and have a bachelor's degree in an area outside of teaching.

Ideas from ISBE Strategy Briefs to Benefit Future Bilingual Educators

Potential Bilingual Candidates	ISBE Guidance
<p>High schoolers who are pursuing or have earned the Illinois State Seal of Biliteracy in a language other than English.</p> <p>This group of students has demonstrated college readiness in English and advanced abilities in a foreign language. The State Seal can be applied toward college credit (varies by university) and can be used in lieu of the target language exam as part of the ISBE Bilingual endorsement.</p>	<p>2x2: A "2x2" program ensures course articulation through preexisting relationships between two- and four-year institutions. Explore which credits were provided for the State Seal of Biliteracy at various institutions of higher education.</p> <p>Grow Your Own CTE Programs: Education-related work-based learning is a concept that applies to this population. Explore the possibilities of students earning dual credit, making them eligible to become paraprofessionals upon graduation. This enables students to earn a living while they are in a residency program gaining hands-on experiences developing linguistically responsive curricula and pedagogical practices.</p>

	<p>Apprenticeships: High school courses that give students exposure to teaching experiences can be very beneficial to them.</p> <p>Incentives: Consider offering hiring bonuses for students who come from the community.</p>
<p>Linguistically diverse paraprofessionals</p>	<p>2x2: Explore partnerships with institutions of higher education that have experience with foreign transcripts for credit recovery. There should also be strong articulation between two- and four-year institutions. This aligns with creating smoother career pathways.</p> <p>Diverse Teacher Pipeline: Students who have been awarded a State Seal of Biliteracy could be targeted for a paraprofessional role that is tied with a residency option.</p> <p>Incentives: Provide financial support to currently uncertified paraprofessionals who are interested in becoming certified teachers to help eliminate the financial barriers they may face.</p>
<p>Community members and career changers who speak the same language as students and have a bachelor's degree in an area outside of teaching</p> <p>This group can be recruited to earn a Transitional Bilingual Educator Provisional License (formerly known as the Type 29). These candidates can be matched to a two-year master's degree program in education that leads to teacher licensure.</p>	<p>Grow Your Own: Bilingual community members who currently have a degree in a field outside of education would need to be matched with an institution of higher education offering a master's program that provides the Professional Educator License (PEL), along with the Bilingual endorsement. Partner with teacher preparation programs that historically serve institutions serving minority candidates or two-year master's programs serving Type 29 candidates.</p> <p>Apprenticeships: Members of this group can be hired as a provisional transitional bilingual educator after passing the target language exam. They would benefit greatly from being mentored by a master teacher.</p> <p>Incentives: Provide financial support to currently uncertified bilingual staff or staff of color (paraprofessionals, tutors, teacher assistants, etc.) who are interested in being certified teachers to help eliminate the financial barriers they may face. Such supports include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paid master's program to achieve the PEL with Bilingual endorsement • Paid student dues and balances owed to institutions • Repayment of student loan

Bilingual Educator Recruitment Strategies

- Districts should know that candidates who are undocumented citizens are eligible for a PEL but may need special outreach due to the sensitivity of the topic. This group could be a very important resource for districts that are receiving high numbers of newly arrived immigrant students. A temporary Social Security number can be obtained so that such individuals can create an ELIS account. There are special considerations for individuals in bilingual early childhood education:
 - Teachers with an ISBE PEL with an Early Childhood Education endorsement should be advised on the approval pathway for Special Education and Bilingual/English as a Second Language endorsements.
 - Students can receive a paraprofessional license from ISBE at the age of 18 through Grow your Own Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs that offer early childhood credentials (Early Childhood Level One) through the Illinois Network of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies. Furthermore, students can take additional coursework and pursue professional development opportunities that are focused on language and literacy development for multilingual learners.

- Financial wrap-around supports can help diversify teacher pipeline opportunities. These wrap-around supports often include close attention to the varied types of financial incentives candidates need beyond just tuition.
 - Assistance sometimes can go directly to the candidate for books, fees, housing assistance, day care, transportation, etc.
 - Districts should make this population aware of the [Minority Teachers of Illinois Scholarship Program](#).
 - Undocumented candidates should know they are eligible for [Monetary Award Program](#) (MAP) grants.
- Districts should hire a staff member within the Human Resources Department to oversee strategies listed in ISBE briefs.
- Districts should train members of hiring committees, so they understand the nuances of hiring a candidate of color.
- Districts should consider an adjusted teaching schedule for paraprofessionals and/or residency candidates to provide ample time for college coursework.
- Districts should consider working with institutes of higher education that have demonstrated success in working with non-traditional students and providing effective cohort model training. Historically Black-serving colleges and Hispanic-serving institutions are likely to be leaders in this area and would be the source of effective strategies for addressing the needs of these students.

Bilingual Educator Retention Strategies

- Mentoring and Induction – To the degree possible, it is important to match bilingual educators with a teacher who has the Bilingual endorsement and the knowledge and skills to teach English learners effectively. Districts in remote areas may want to consider partnering with neighboring districts and pooling resources so as to support bilingual teachers in each location. (Regional Offices of Education might be a great resource for this type of programming and support.) Certain check-ins and guidance can be provided remotely.
- Positive working conditions – Once bilingual educators are hired into a district, it is important that they receive ongoing support from school leaders. School leaders need to understand the unique characteristics of a diverse teaching population and must be sensitive to the increased workload that comes with teaching in more than one language. Training for school leaders on topics such as interviewing diverse candidates, mentoring bilingual teachers, bilingual education methods, and evaluation will go a long way toward providing a positive work environment.
- Teacher planning and collaboration – Districts must be sensitive regarding the workload of bilingual educators and the types of requests made of them that could jeopardize their ability to deliver high-quality instruction. Bilingual educators are often pulled from class to translate/interpret for parents; they lack materials in the home language that they are left to translate; they are seen as a go-to resource by families for immigration and other issues; and they are often asked to make phone calls to non-English speaking parents, which can take time.