

Teacher Vacancy Grant FY 2024

Community Consolidated Schools District 168

The Challenge

All of the 66 school districts in South Cook County compete for a small pool of teacher candidates. CCSD168 has experienced vacancies in almost all subject areas in middle school and consistently in special education, bilingual, art, and music in K-5 buildings. The district aims to reduce unfilled teaching positions and create a more sustainable education system.

Strategic Local Investments

Strategy 1: Pathways – Alternative Certification Programs

The grant supports CCSD 168 to collaborate with colleges and universities to align teacher education programs with current and future needs, ensuring graduates are well-prepared for classroom realities.

Outcomes

- **Twelve employees** are receiving their Bilingual or English as a Second Language (ESL) certifications with 100% of their tuition paid directly to Governors State University, thanks to grant funds.

Strategy 2: Compensation

CCSD 168 utilized grant funds to enhance teacher compensation, supplementing teacher salaries with:

- **Retention Stipends:** Provided \$1,000 stipends to 80 teachers as an incentive to return the next school year.
- **Longevity Bonuses:** Provided compensation for 23 long-term employees based upon education level and years of experience, ranging from \$1,416 to \$13,866, based on an individual's profile.

Outcomes

- Staff retention in recent years:
 - 2021: 80.7%
 - 2022: 81.9%
 - 2023: 83.6%
 - 2024: 82%

Strategy 3: Culture and Climate

CCSD 168 has invested grant funds in dedicated spaces for mentoring and professional development support to foster a culture of continuous learning, collaboration, and talent development, leading to enhanced performance and competitiveness.

Outcomes



\$337,315
FY 2024 Grant Award

- Meeting rooms allow for increased collaboration and one-on-one mentoring sessions, group discussions, and workshops.
- Student achievement has improved because staff have a location where they can meet that provides access to additional resources, such as books, online courses, industry publications, and educational materials relevant to professional development.

“I am so excited to start the ESL certification program offered through the Teacher Vacancy Grant and am incredibly grateful for the opportunity to improve my practice as an educator. I know that the skills I learn will be helpful for my bilingual students, and I will also be able to use many of the strategies with the monolingual English-speaking students I work with in reading intervention, as well.”

Karen Barkley