

## Early Results Show Improved Recruitment and Retention in State's Most Understaffed School Districts

### Overview

The [Teacher Vacancy Grant Pilot Program \(TVGPP\)](#) is a three-year initiative launched by the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) to address teacher shortages in districts with the highest vacancies. The program, which was implemented in the 2023-24 school year, allocated \$45 million in state funds to 170 districts, serving approximately 870,000 students.

The TVGPP has enabled districts to implement a range of strategies to address teacher shortages, with a strong focus on improving teacher compensation and professional development. The program's flexibility has allowed districts to tailor their approaches to their unique challenges, showing early promise in reducing vacancies and supporting retention in high-need districts. Continued investment and evaluation are essential to sustain and build on these outcomes.

### Key Objectives

- **Reduce Unfilled Teaching Positions:** Target districts with the most teacher vacancies.
- **Support Teacher Recruitment and Retention:** Use evidence-based strategies.

### Short-Term Impacts

#### New Teacher Hires

- A total of **5,387 new teachers** were hired across TVGPP districts in the 2023-24 school year, resulting in a net increase of **519 teachers**.
- Urban districts saw a net increase of **573 teachers**, and rural districts saw a net decrease of 54 teachers.

#### Staff Support and Retention

- A total of **10,700 employees** participated in grant-funded programs aimed at reducing attrition.
- A total of **11,000 teachers** were retained through grant-funded incentives and support programs.
- A total of **1,500 non-certified staff** were supported in pursuing licensure and **450 certified staff** in obtaining further endorsements.

#### Changes in Unfilled Positions

- A total of **51.8% of TVGPP districts** saw a decrease in unfilled teaching positions from the previous year, compared to **17.3% of non-TVGPP districts**.
- Despite some increases in unfilled positions, TVGPP districts showed a more significant reduction in vacancies compared to non-TVGPP districts.

### Considerations

- **Localized Solutions:** The causes and solutions for teacher shortages were found to be highly localized, varying significantly between rural and urban districts.

Illinois State Board of Education. (2023). [How Illinois Districts are Addressing Teacher Shortages: An Evaluation of the Teacher Vacancy Grant Pilot Program \(Report No. 240827\\_12\)](#). ISBE.

Illinois State Board of Education. (2023). [Teacher Vacancy Grant Pilot Program: Short-Term Outcomes \(Report No. 240916\)](#). ISBE

- **Implementation Flexibility:** The flexibility in how districts could use the grant funds allowed for innovative and tailored approaches to address their specific needs.