DISCOVERY PARTNERS INSTITUTE

IWERC

Illinois Workforce and Education Research Collaborative

PART OF THE UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS SYSTEM

Teacher Vacancy Grant Pilot Program

Year 1 Evaluation

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Teacher Vacancy Grant Pilot Program (TVGPP)

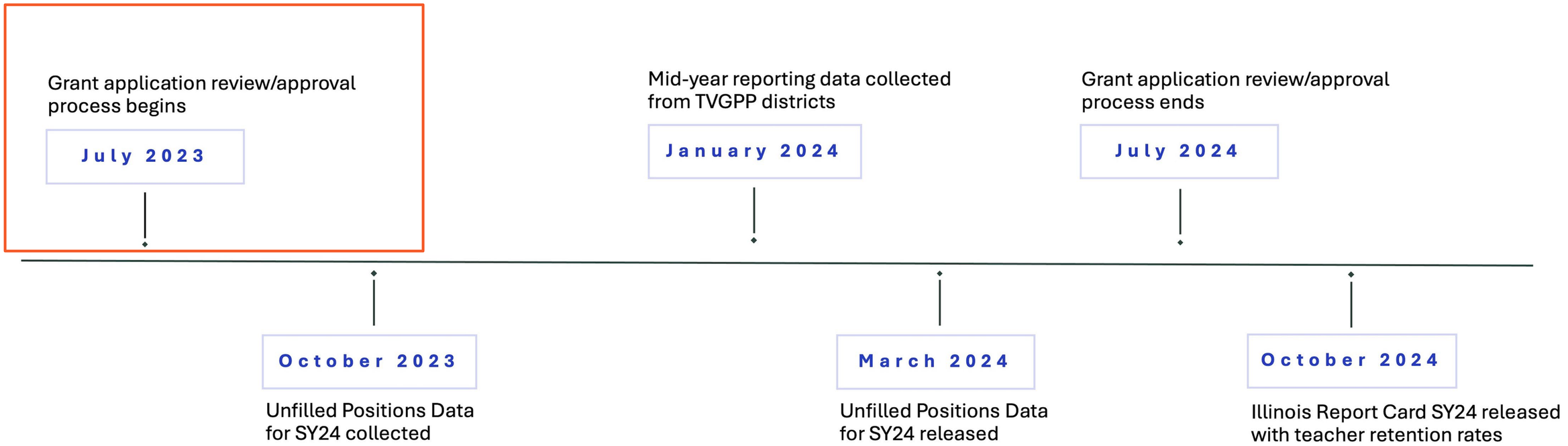
Background

- In school year 2022-23 (SY23), 80% of the roughly 3,500 unfilled teaching positions were concentrated in 20% of districts (about 170 of 865 districts) statewide (ISBE 2023a, 2023b).
- The Teacher Vacancy Grant Pilot Program (TVGPP), a three-year initiative, was developed to support these 170 school districts that experienced the greatest challenges staffing teacher positions (Office of the Governor JB Pritzker, 2023).
- During the first year of the program (SY24), 170 TVGPP-eligible districts applied for funding, which totaled $45 million.

Teacher Vacancy Grant Pilot Program

Evaluation Timeline

Study 1: Analysis of applications' narratives and proposed budgets



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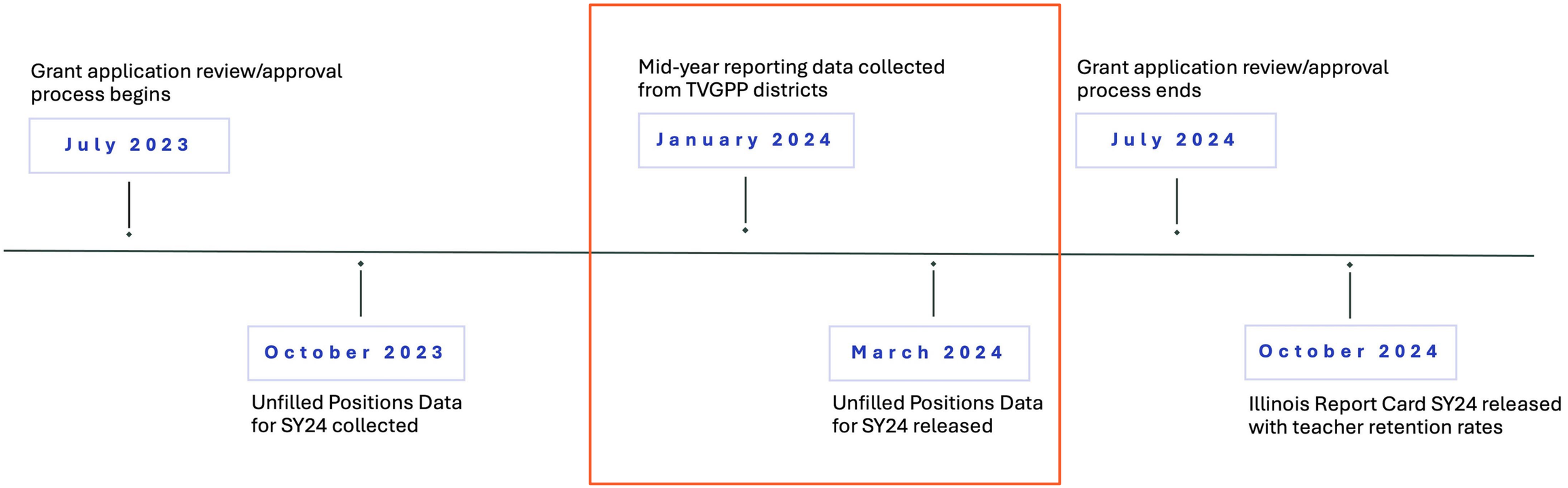

Study 2: Analysis of short-term outcomes

Study 1: Research Questions

1. How do districts conceptualize causes of teacher shortages?
2. What do districts propose as solutions to mitigate shortages?
3. What was the alignment between causes and solutions proposed by districts?
4. How do districts allocate funding to various solutions?

TVGPP Study 1

RQ1: Causes of teacher shortages in TVGPP districts

- Causes for vacancies across districts are complex.
- Districts reported, on average, 4-5 different causes for unfilled positions.

TVGPP Study 1

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Table 1. Frequencies of reported **causes** for teacher vacancies

Causes of teacher vacancies	Number of districts	Percent of districts (N = 156)
Compensation Inadequate salary/benefits	114	73.1%
Lack Qualified Teachers Limited pool of qualified applicants, in difficult-to-staff areas	109	69.9%
Attrition	97	62.2%
Neighbor Districts Loss of staff to nearby districts due to compensation or other attractions	90	57.7%
Working Conditions Untenable school climate, high stress, heavy workload, other factors	72	46.2%
Location Too rural, no housing, long commute, or other location-related issues	63	40.4%
Teacher Preparation Lack of partnerships with teacher preparation programs, difficulty placing student teachers	42	26.9%

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RQ1: Causes of teacher shortages in TVGPP districts

Table 2. Top causes for vacancies reported by **rural** and **urban** districts

Cause	Number of rural districts	Percent of rural districts (n = 92)	Cause	Number of urban districts	Percent of urban districts (n = 64)
Compensation	72	78.3%	Lack Qualified Teachers	52	81.3%
Attrition	59	64.1%	Compensation	42	65.6%
Lack Qualified Teachers	57	62.0%	Neighbor Districts	39	60.9%
Location	56	60.9%	Attrition	38	59.4%
Neighbor Districts	51	55.4%	Working Conditions	29	45.3%
Working Conditions	43	46.7%	Teacher Preparation	19	29.7%
Teacher Preparation	23	25.0%	Student Characteristics	18	28.1%

TVGPP Study 1

RQ2: Solutions to mitigate teacher shortages in TVGPP districts

- Solutions proposed were multi-pronged.
- Districts reported, on average, 4-5 different strategies to reduce shortages.

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Table 3. Frequencies of proposed **solutions**

Solutions for teacher vacancies	Number of districts	Percent of districts (N = 156)
Teacher Preparation Tuition reimbursements, student teacher & cooperating teacher payments, GYO	109	69.9%
Professional Learning Provision of induction/mentoring programs, coaching, other learning opportunities	104	66.7%
Special Compensation Short-term/one-time hiring bonuses, retention bonuses, other stipends	103	66.0%
Growth Opportunity Furnishing costs for current teachers' pursuit of additional licensure/endorsements	75	48.1%
Recruitment Increasing advertising budget, improving interview protocol, hiring recruitment staff	74	47.4%
Teacher Support Self-care programs, affinity groups, teacher/staff celebrations	56	35.9%
Classroom Resources – Stipends for classroom supplies	48	30.8%
Location – Stipends for relocation, commute, general living costs	32	20.5%

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Growth Opportunity Furnishing costs for current teachers' pursuit of additional licensure/endorsements	75	48.1%
Recruitment Increasing advertising budget, improving interview protocol, hiring recruitment staff	74	47.4%
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With TVGPP funding, districts are investing in the education of their own staff.

TVGPP Study 1

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Table 4. Top solutions proposed by **rural** and **urban** districts

Solution	Number of rural districts	Percent of rural districts (n = 92)	Solution	Number of urban districts	Percent of urban districts (n = 63)
Professional Learning	65	70.7%	Teacher Preparation	50	78.1%
Teacher Preparation	59	64.1%	Special Compensation	45	70.3%
Special Compensation	58	63.0%	Recruitment	41	64.1%
Growth Opportunity	46	50.0%	Professional Learning	39	60.9%
Classroom Resources	38	41.3%	Growth Opportunity	29	45.3%
Teacher Support	36	39.1%	Teacher Support	20	31.3%
Recruitment	33	35.9%	Location	14	21.9%

- Proposed solutions were *well-aligned* to causes identified.
- Over 98% of districts proposed solutions that properly targeted recruitment, retention, or both, depending on description of causes.

RQ3: Alignment between causes and solutions in TVGPP districts

RQ4: Funding allocation Compensation strategies

Teacher Compensation

Districts commonly used strategies focused on enhancing teacher compensation to support retention and to build pipeline of teachers to fill positions.

Coursework & Licensure

Large expenditures on coursework and licensure, which goes to teachers or teacher colleges.

TVGPP Study 1

RQ4: Funding allocation – compensation strategies

Table 5. Common compensation strategies

Compensation Strategy	Number of Districts Using Strategy	Total Dollars Spent on Strategy	Average Dollars Spent on Strategy (by Utilizing Districts)	Range Spent Per Individual
Coursework & Licensure Costs	116	$8,303,108	$71,579	
Non-licensed staff				$250 – $35,000
Licensed staff				$840 – $13,416
Both				$1,000 – $15,000
Stipends for Serving as Mentors	59	$1,171,699	$19,859	$167 – $5,000
Paying Student Teachers*	28	$9,072,393	$324,014	
Stipend per semester		*$1,695,975 excluding CPS	*$62,814 excluding CPS	$200 – $6,250
Stipend per year				$500 – $10,000
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Housing Stipends	11	$363,995	$33,090	$400 – $15,400

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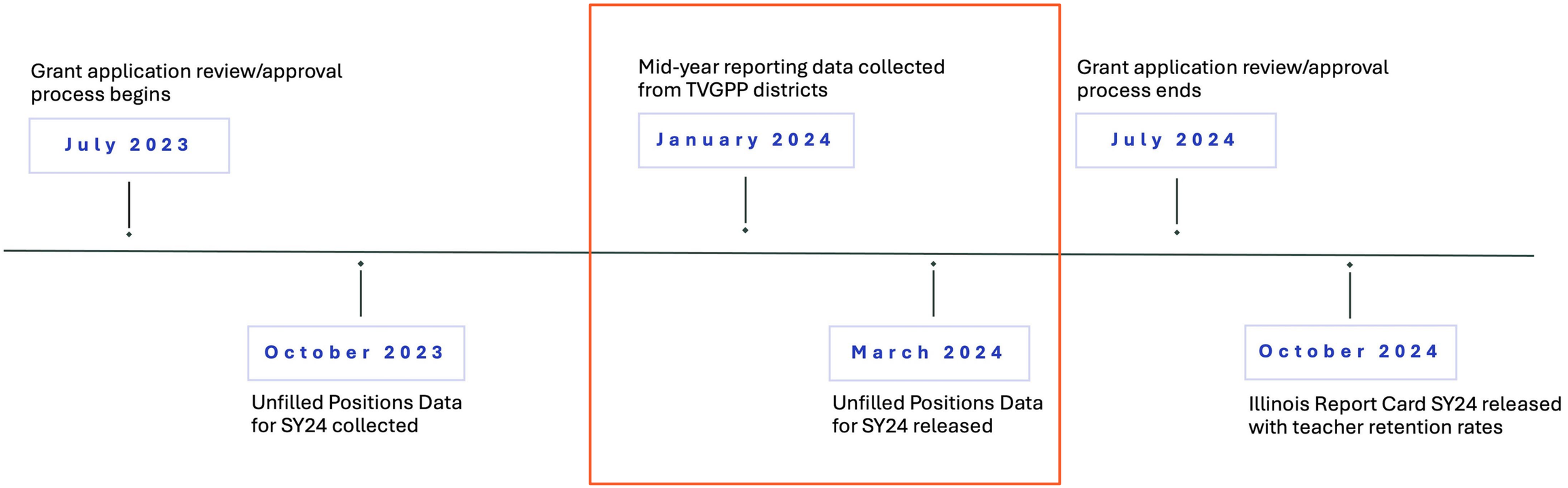

Study 2: Analysis of short-term outcomes

Study 2: Research Questions

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How many new teachers were hired in SY24 as part of TVGPP?

2

How many teachers and staff were supported by grant funds in SY24?

3

What changes in unfilled positions occurred from SY23 to SY24?

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Caveats to consider when interpreting results

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Early, non-causal findings

Ambiguous temporal precedence (Johnson & Christensen, 2020) between grant applications and unfilled positions SY24.

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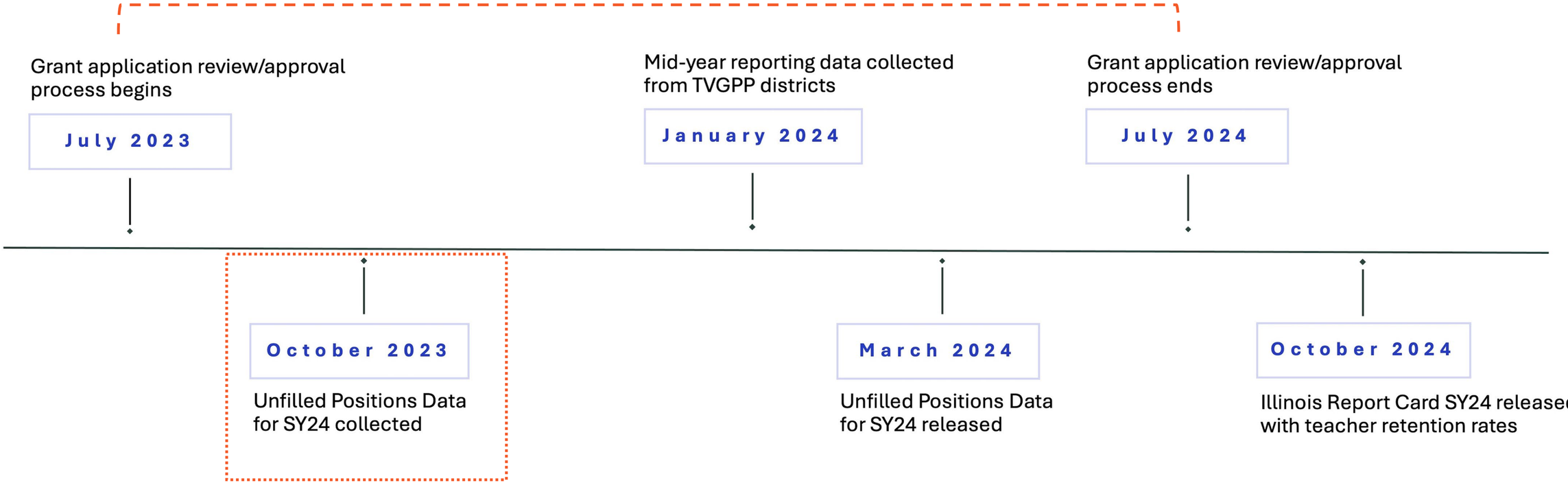

TVGPP Study 2

Caveats to consider when interpreting results

Early, non-causal findings

- *Ambiguous temporal precedence* (Johnson & Christensen, 2020) between grant applications and unfilled positions SY24.

Protracted administrative processes

- Agreement needed with teachers unions

Exogenous factors

- Declining student enrollment
- ESSER funding
- Additional revenue from other state and federal grant programs

Pathway investments take time

- Many districts invested in pathway programs for licensure and additional endorsements.

TVGPP Study 2

RQ1: New teachers hired in TVGPP districts

- 132 TVGPP districts provided mid-year performance data in winter/spring 2024.
- Number of new teachers hired > number of teachers who did not return.
- Districts reported net increase of 519 teachers for SY24, or a 1% rise (percentage change).

Table 6. Comparison of new teacher hires, teachers not retained, and net changes in teaching staff

	New teacher hires		Teachers not retained		Net teaching staff		SY23 total teacher FTE
	Total	Percent	Total	Percent	Total	Percent change	
TVGPP districts (n = 132)	5,387	10.0%	4,868	9.1%	519	1.0%	53,746.7
Rural TVGPP districts (n = 79)	683	9.4%	737	10.2%	-54	-0.7%	7,245.4
Urban TVGPP districts (n = 53)	4,704	10.1%	4,131	8.9%	573	1.2%	46,501.2

TVGPP Study 2

RQ1: New teachers hired in TVGPP districts

- 132 TVGPP districts provided mid-year performance data in winter/spring 2024.
- Number of new teachers hired > number of teachers who did not return.
- Districts reported net increase of 519 teachers for SY24, or a 1% rise (percentage change).

Table 6. Comparison of new teacher hires, teachers not retained, and net changes in teaching staff

	New teacher hires		Teachers not retained		Net teaching staff		SY23 total teacher FTE
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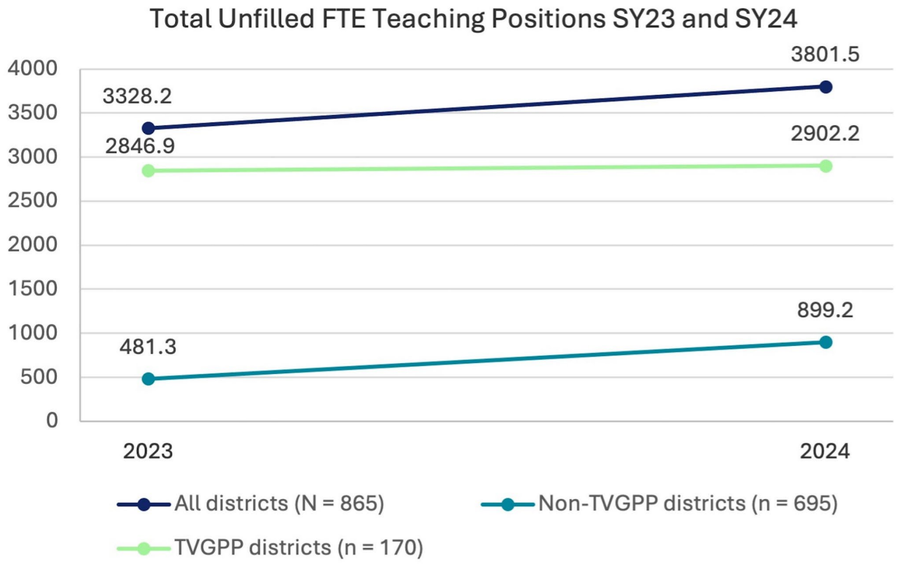
RQ3: Changes in unfilled positions from SY23 to SY24

Figure 1. Total unfilled teaching positions in SY23 and SY24 across districts statewide and by non-TVGPP and TVGPP districts.



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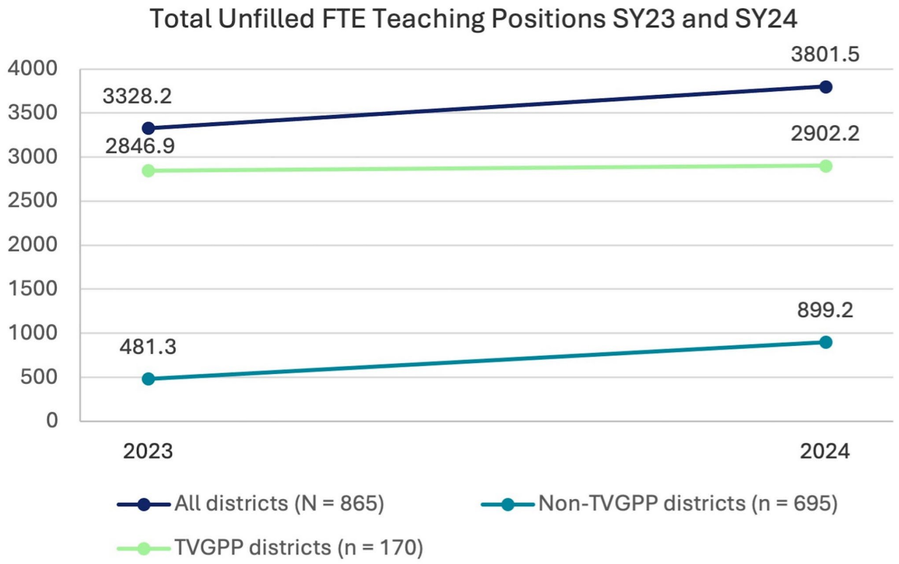
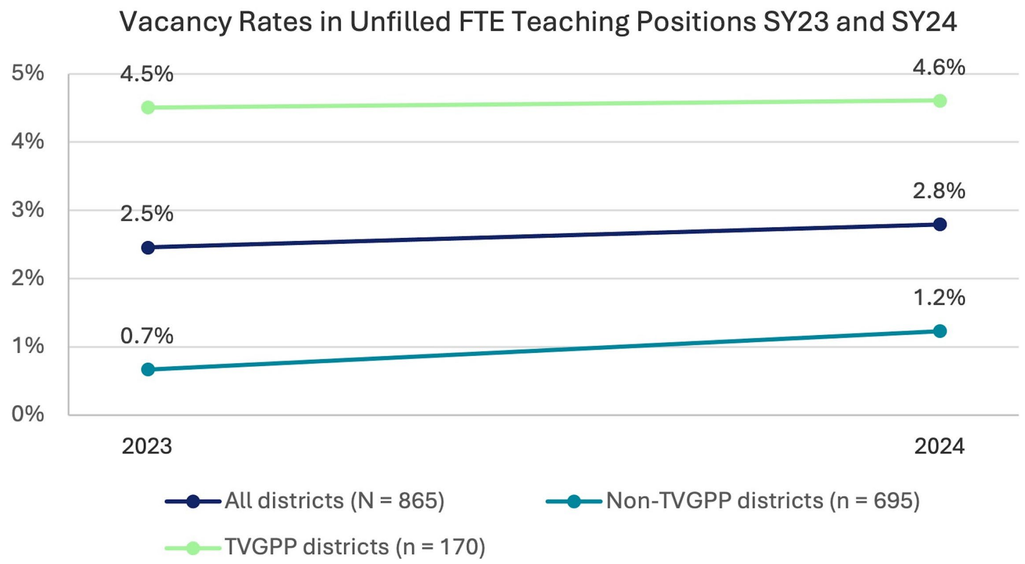


Figure 2. Vacancy rates in unfilled teaching positions in SY23 and SY24 across districts statewide and by non-TVGPP and TVGPP districts.



TVGPP Study 2

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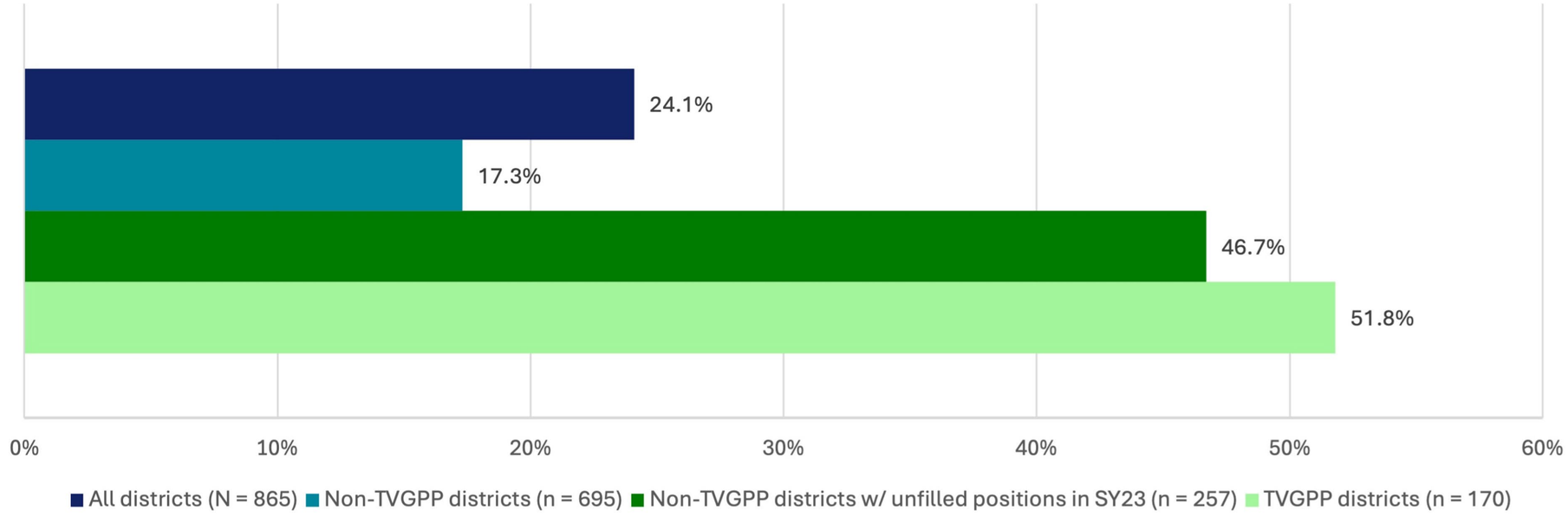
- Measure of overall change: Did unfilled positions increase, decrease, or stay the same from SY23 to SY24? (Increase = vacancies rose in SY24. Decrease = vacancies fell in SY24.)
- How many districts saw a decrease (i.e., positive trend) in unfilled positions?

Figure 3. Comparison of districts that saw a **decrease** in unfilled teaching positions from SY23 to SY24 for districts statewide and by non-TVGPP and TVGPP districts.



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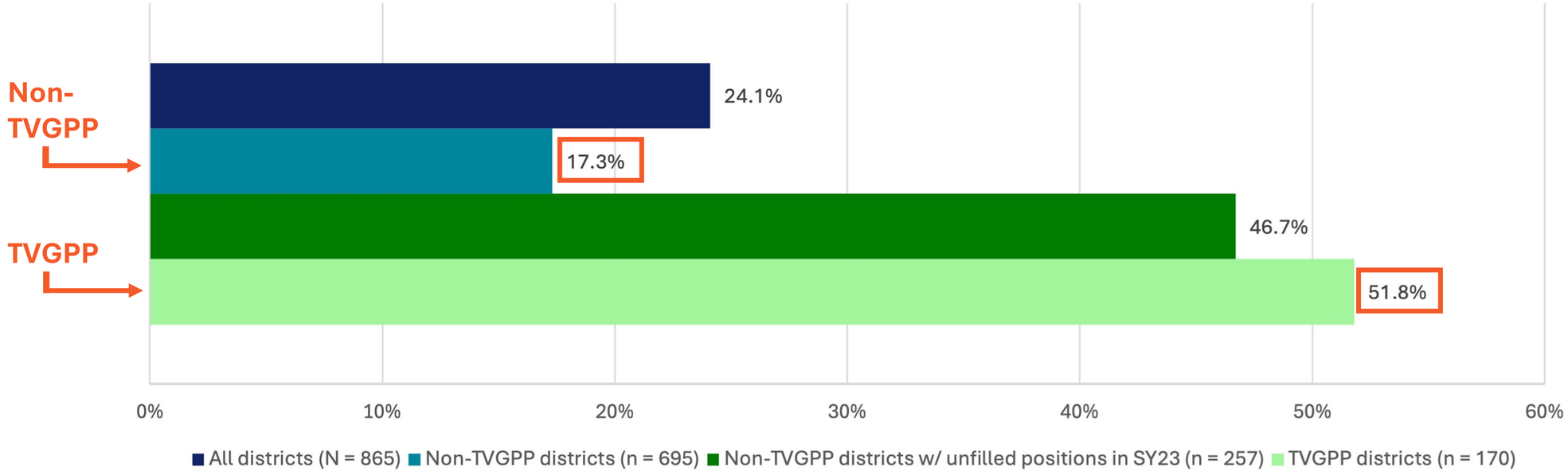

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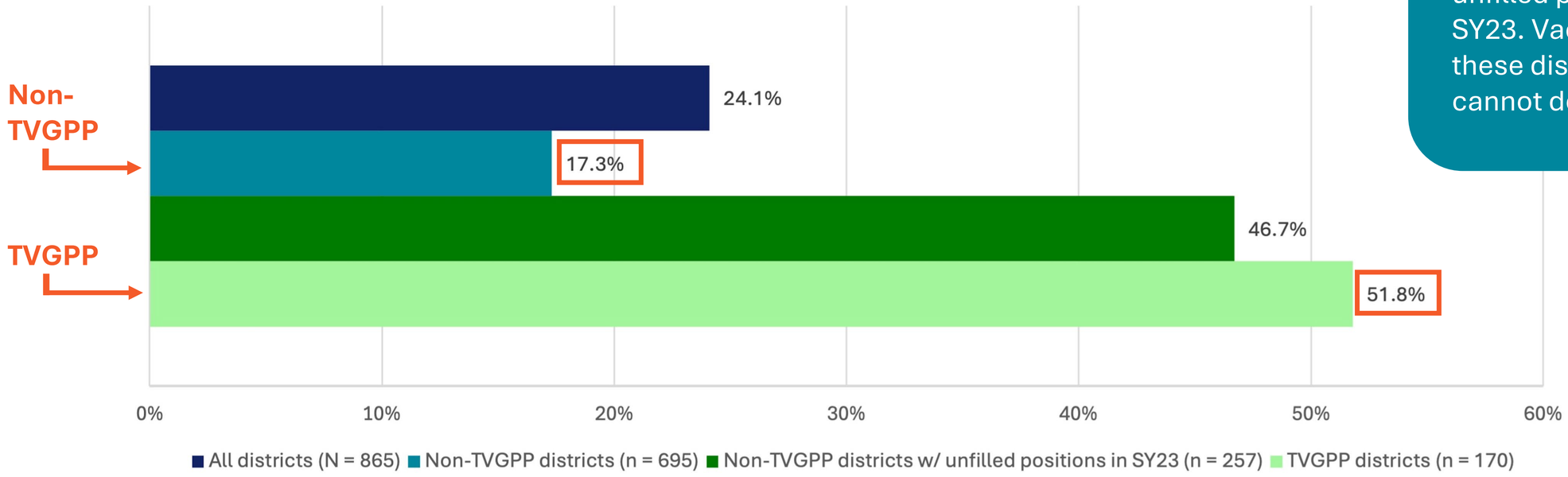

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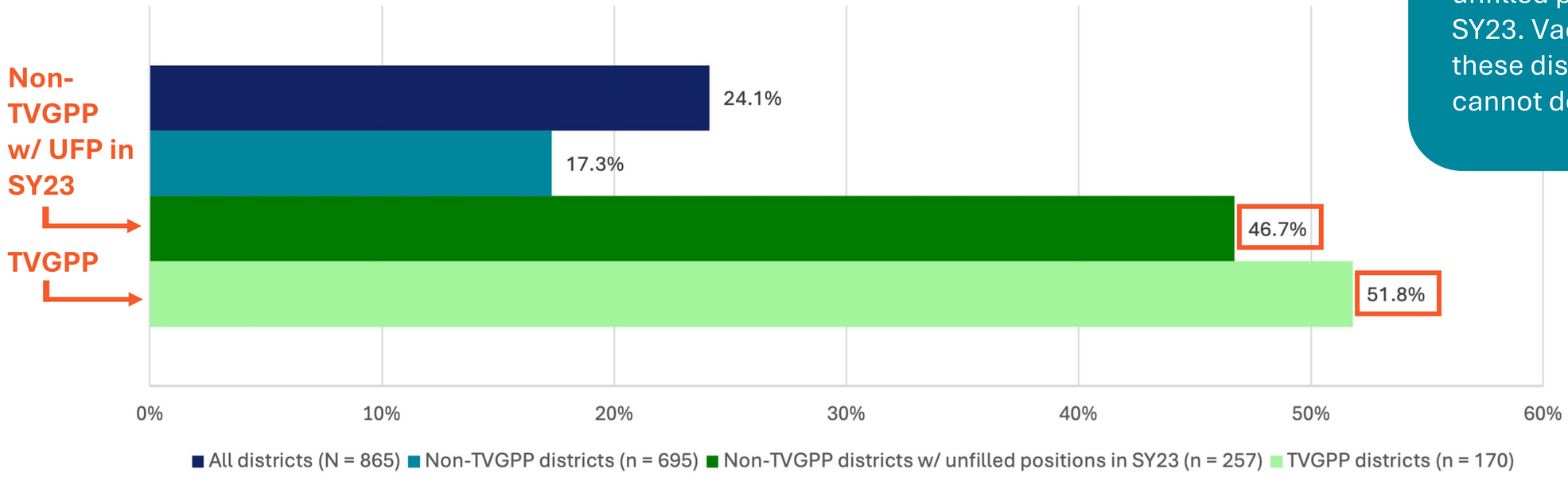

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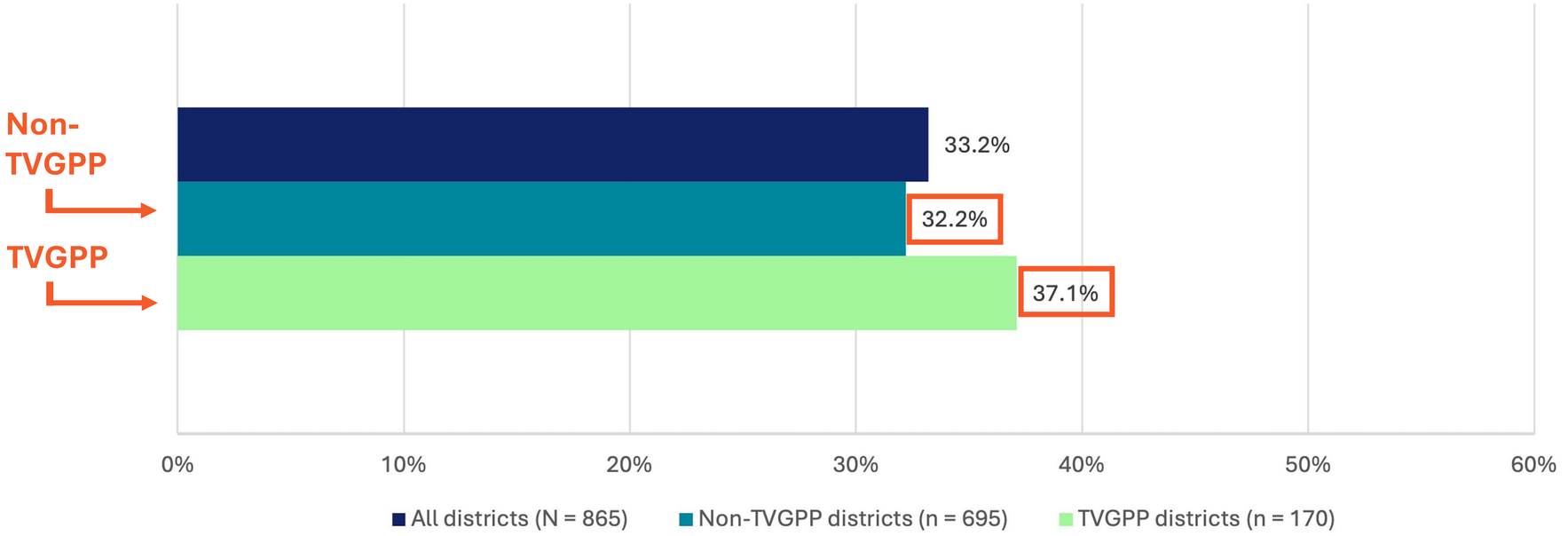
Figure 4. Comparison of districts that saw an **increase** in unfilled teaching positions from SY23 to SY24 for districts statewide and by non-TVGPP and TVGPP districts.



TVGPP Study 2

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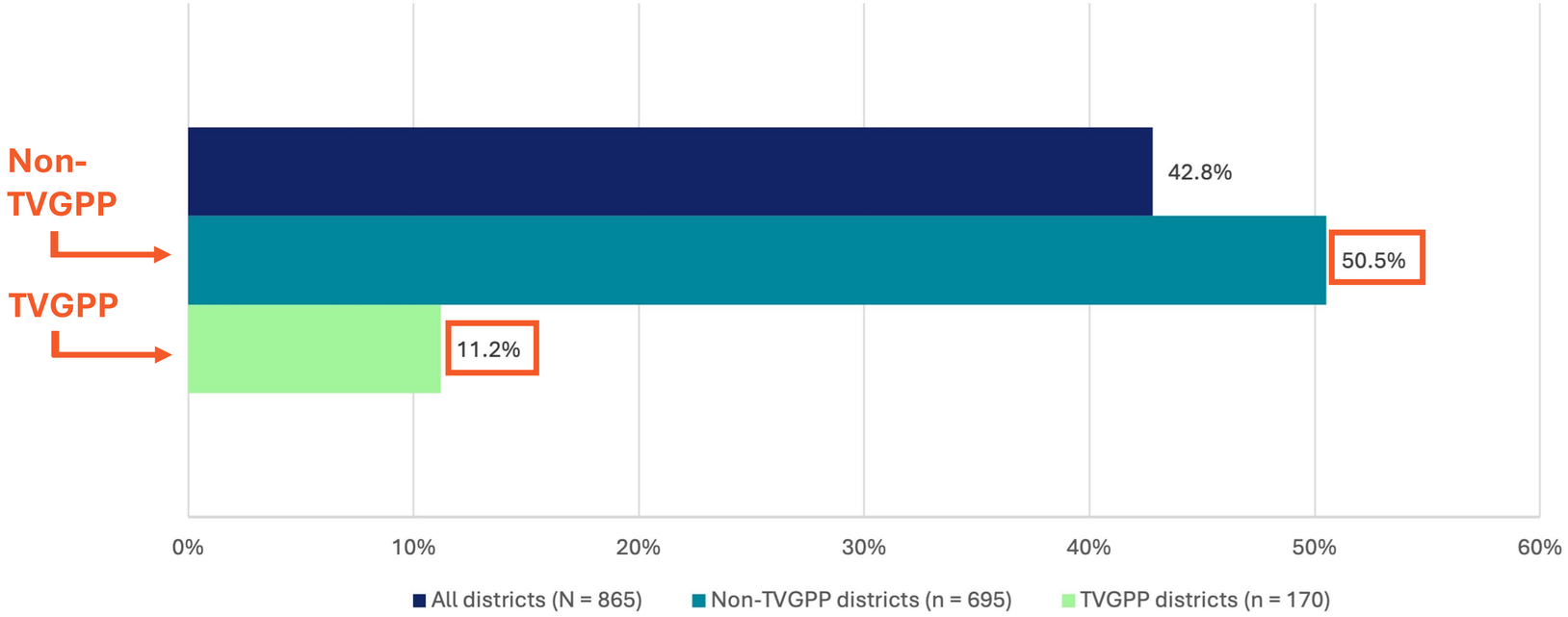
Figure 5. Comparison of districts that saw **no change** in unfilled teaching positions from SY23 to SY24 for districts statewide and by non-TVGPP and TVGPP districts.



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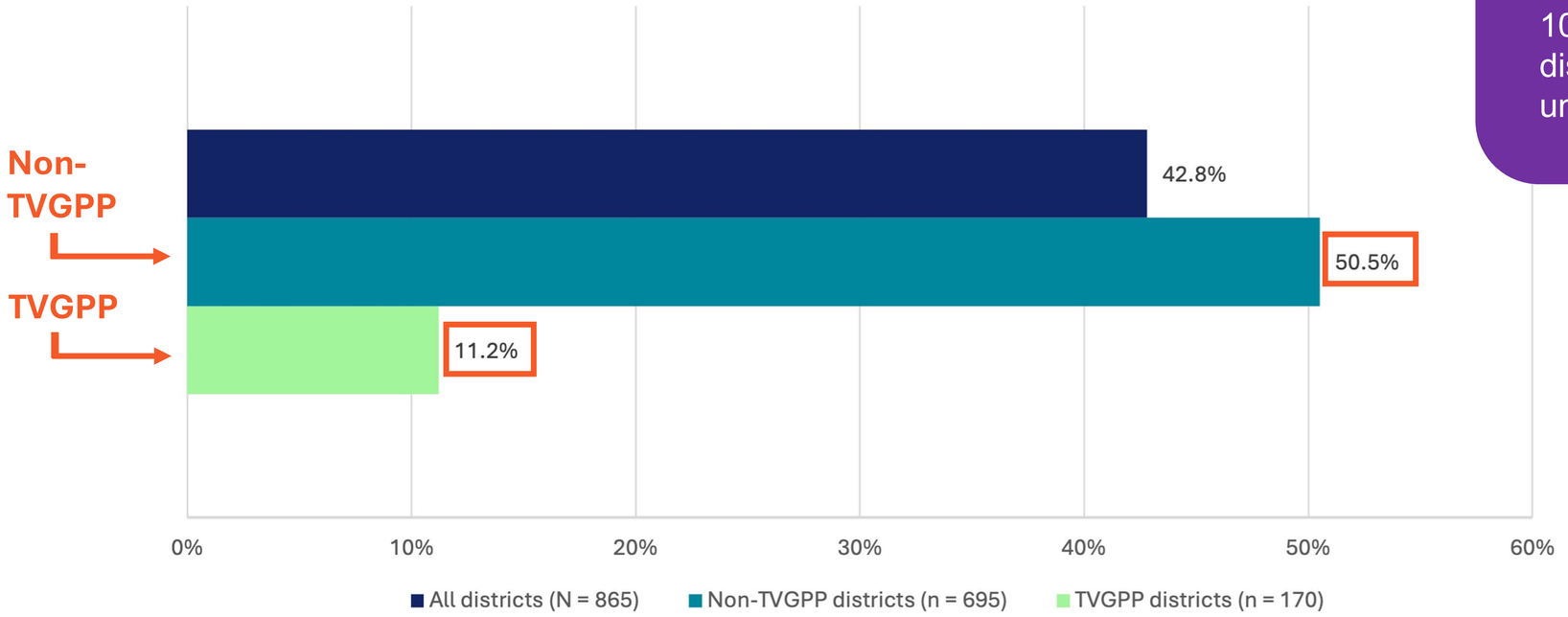

85.8% (301 districts) of these non-TVGPP districts had zero unfilled positions in SY23 & SY24.

100% (19 districts) of TVGPP districts had the same number of unfilled positions in both years.

TVGPP Study 2

Additional analyses and conclusions

- Study 2 also examines impact of TVGPP funding on staff participation (from mid-year performance reports) and the extent of change in unfilled teaching positions.
- In first year, TVGPP reach appears to be wide.
  - 10,700 staff (teaching and non-teaching) participated in retention-focused programs.
  - Net increase in new teaching staff for SY24.
- Early results show promise, but time will tell.

Thank you!

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Illinois Workforce and Education Research Collaborative (IWERC)
University of Illinois

For full reports, scan or go to
https://go.illinois.edu/teachervacancypilot