



Illinois State Board of Education

100 North First Street • Springfield, Illinois 62777-0001
www.isbe.net

James T. Meeks
Chairman

Tony Smith, Ph.D.
State Superintendent of Education

Teach Illinois Recommendations ILLINOIS STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION Adopted October 17, 2018

The Teach Illinois: Strong Teachers, Strong Classrooms year of inquiry resulted in a suite of seven recommendations. Input from commenters assisted in the development of two categories of recommendations. ISBE believes stakeholder engagement is critical prior to legislative action. The first category is recommended legislative changes and the second category includes ISBE actions.

Recommendations to the General Assembly

The recommendations to the General Assembly focus on recommendation IV, V, and VII. There are three recommendations in this section. The first two recommendations for statutory changes occur in 105 ILCS 21B. The third recommendation requires changes in 105 ILCS 21A and 105 ILCS 5/2-3.53a.

Note that in addition to the proposed legislative changes outlined in this section, additional detail regarding the immediate actions ISBE will take is provided in the subsequent section.

1. Test of Basic Skills¹

ISBE is committed to ensuring educators demonstrate basic skills. Numerous commenters suggested that ISBE remove the successful completion of a test of basic skills as a requirement for initial licensure. The Teach Illinois report indicates that ISBE is interested in determining the relationship between a test of basic skills and efficacy in both pre-service and in-service teaching.

Current statute provides the space for this examination. However, current statute also requires those already possessing a bachelor's degree to complete a test of basic skills in order to receive licensure in Illinois. The completion of a bachelor's degree from a regionally accredited university should suffice for the demonstration of basic skills. It is important to note that in many of the instances where a test of basic skills is required, the individual applying for the license would either already currently possess a master's degree or will receive the degree at the conclusion of the program. Language in 21B-20 (Types of Licenses), 21B-25 (Endorsement on Licenses), and 21B-30 (Educator Testing) requires modification to effect this change. These recommended changes align with Recommendation V of the Teach Illinois report.

2. Job-Embedded Programs

Generally, there is support for creating additional avenues of entry for individuals into teaching. In particular, commenters identified those serving as paraprofessionals and those who wished to change careers should have additional ways of receiving a license apart from completing a program through an institution of higher education. Also, commenters emphasized that all programs, regardless of delivery method must be accountable to the same standards. Language in 21B-20 (Types of Licenses), 21B-25 (Endorsement on Licenses), and 21B-50 (Alternative Educator Licensure Programs) requires modification in order to increase the avenues of entry to obtain a professional educator license in Illinois. These recommended changes align with Recommendation IV of the Teach Illinois report.

¹ Successful completion of a test of basic skills is not required for entry into a teacher preparation program. Rather, it is a requirement in order to student teach.

3. Funding for Mentoring Programs²

ISBE continues to advocate for both teacher and principal funding for mentoring. In recent years, however, funding in these areas is virtually non-existent. In addition to participant feedback, a growing body of research supports the importance of early career mentoring as a central means of retaining teachers and principals as well as increasing instructional efficacy.

Section 21A-10 provides, when funds are appropriated, for new teacher induction and mentoring grants.³ These grants focus upon supporting teachers in developing the skills and strategies necessary for instructional excellence.⁴

New Principal Mentoring Program, which began in 2007, provides funds, when appropriated, for mentoring of principals in data analysis, building, professional learning communities, developing distributive leadership practices, and aligning professional learning and instructional programs.⁵

In addition to the aforementioned, induction and mentoring supports should be available to the teacher or principal with multiple years of experience. Including these individuals within the previously identified statute requires modification to portions of 105 ILCS 105 21A and 105 ILCS 5/2-3.53a.

Advocating funding for this work this section along with continued advocacy for fully funding Illinois school districts provides the infrastructure necessary in order to create the greatest likelihood that teachers and principals stay in their schools or working in the profession within Illinois.

This recommendation aligns with Recommendation VIII in the Teach Illinois report.

ISBE Actions

The recommendations in the Teach Illinois report provide opportunity to initiate new work (e.g., Recommendations I and V) as well as coordinate with projects that are ongoing (Recommendations II, III, IV, VI, and VII). In order to develop and implement the most durable solutions, ISBE is committed to working with stakeholders possessing expertise and interest within each recommendation.

Recommendation I

1. It is essential to highlight and celebrate the work that teachers do every day in order to elevate the teaching profession, as well as develop common understandings of the value of this work within a larger community. At the same time, it is also important that the identification of what is recognized is led by those in the communities where the work is occurring. Thus, elevating the teaching profession requires the participation from a wide group of stakeholders that includes practitioners, those expressly focused on matters of educational policy and, equally important, those who reside in communities and who can serve as the strongest spokespeople for this work.

ISBE will coordinate a campaign that provides an accurate image of the work that occurs in schools through a variety of avenues (e.g., social media, community outreach) and identify and support those within diverse communities who can serve as the strongest voice to share this work. The work includes contemplating a variety of issues to address and engage including compensation, working conditions, and professional growth. In addition to sharing both broadly

² Please see ISBE recommendation VII for additional information on quality assurance.

³ The New teacher Mentoring and Induction grants began in 2004-2005.

⁴ 105 ILCS 5/21A-10

⁵ 105 ILCS 5/2-3.53a

and locally the work occurring in schools, using community-based advocates provides a credibility to the message and may assist in the recruitment of individuals into the field as the messages shared within communities are locally specific.

Timeline: ISBE will send out invitations in November and convene the group in the winter 2019. A more detailed timeline will be determined as a result of the first convening.

Recommendation II

2. ISBE will continue to work with stakeholders on the identification of a college and career pathway endorsement in education.⁶ This is exemplified by the work being done in Township High School District 214 in Cook County and Rockford Public Schools as well as the opportunities presented by the Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness (PWR) Act, the Dual Credit Quality Act, ESSA, and the reauthorization of the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act.

Timeline: As part of the PWR Act, a career pathway within the Health and Public Service Career Cluster should be formally identified no later than March 2019. This work is currently ongoing within the 60x25 regional network located at Northern Illinois University.

Recommendation III

3. Many commenters identified the importance of partnerships between districts and colleges and universities with approved preparation programs. Some wrote that the partnerships must be robust and move beyond colleges and universities simply requesting placements for its candidates.

ISBE will host regional peer-to-peer meetings between school districts, ROEs/ISCs, and institutions of higher education to identify effective partnership models in Illinois and to create guidance on developing mutually beneficial partnerships.

More specifically, questions such as the following will be considered:

- What are the elements of a successful partnership between districts and colleges/universities for the purposes of educator preparation?
- How can institutions of higher education, ROEs/ISCs, and districts work together to target high high-needs areas within a district or region?
- What experiences and supports are necessary in order to recruit, prepare, and retain a diverse teacher candidate corps?

Timeline: ISBE will begin to establish meeting dates and locations imminently. The first meetings will occur in the spring of 2019 and meet quarterly thereafter.

4. As ISBE was formulating the Every Student Succeeds Act State Plan for Illinois, it identified a competitive grant that provides awards for a school district and an institution of higher education with approved educator preparation programs to partner in order to develop innovative approaches to fieldwork required in the preparation of teacher candidates. Information about these partnerships will also be shared via peer-to-peer learning.

Timeline: The Innovative Fieldwork grant will be released by December 1, 2018. The intent is for planning work to occur in spring 2019 and for study to occur during the 2019-20 school year

⁶ One mechanism for this work is using the Educators Rising program. Educators Rising provides the opportunity for partnerships between districts and higher education as well as offering dual credit. There are multiple ways to modify the program to meet local needs. At this time, there are a small number of Educators Rising programs at Illinois institutions of higher education.

Recommendation IV

5. Many of the commenters suggested that collaboration with stakeholders in the development of results-based, innovative programs is imperative. To this end, ISBE will work with the Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE), the State Educator Preparation and Licensure Board (SEPLB)⁷, and other stakeholders to identify appropriate and necessary competencies a beginning teacher must demonstrate as well as innovative models of delivery that emphasize inputs and outputs. This work aligns with the recommended statutory changes for Job-Embedded Preparation Programs identified previously.

Timeline: Introduce this work at the next meeting of SEPLB (December 2018) and work through September 2019 to identify competencies and delivery models. Begin drafting rules in September 2019 to bring before SEPLB and ISBE in November 2019.

6. ISBE will repeal Section 25.620 in order to clarify that teacher candidates may be compensated during student teaching.⁸
7. ISBE will include the recommendations from higher education deans regarding subsequent endorsements in Part 25.100 (e.g., 18 course hours for the receipt of a subsequent endorsement or successful completion of the applicable content test).
8. In Part 25.100,⁹ ISBE will include a provision for an individual to receive a subsequent endorsement through the successful completion of the applicable content test.

Timeline: Part 25 (Educator Licensure) will open in December 2018. These changes will be shared with SEPLB and ISBE at their respective December meetings.

9. ISBE will develop a multi-step approval process. This process will focus, generally, upon providing a means for programs to demonstrate capacity and then a multi-year time period during which to collect data to use for formal approval.

Timeline: ISBE will work with members of Partnership for Educator Preparation (PEP), Diverse Learner Ready Teacher (DLRT), Continuous Improvement Community of Practice (CICP)¹⁰, SEPLB, and other stakeholders beginning in December 2018 to identify the multi-step preparation program approval and appropriate outcome indicators. This work will be completed no later than December 2019.

10. Illinois school districts have many educators with great expertise in supporting English Learners (ELs). ISBE will partner with the Illinois Bilingual Advisory Council¹¹ to develop criteria for district-based programs leading to the ESL/bilingual endorsement in order to ensure that practicing teachers are best able to support ELs.

⁷ SEPLB membership includes faculty from colleges and universities with approved preparation programs, regional superintendents of schools, and practicing teachers and administrators. IBHE is represented by an ex-officio member.

⁸ One commenter stated that ISBE does not currently allow candidates to student teach outside of Illinois. This rule was modified in the spring 2017 to allow candidates to student teach outside of Illinois.

⁹ Also, references to Part 25.100 will be included, where applicable, in modifications to other portions of Part 25 (e.g., 25.37, 25.43, 25.96, among others).

¹⁰ PEP membership includes district and building leaders, district hiring managers, teachers, and college and university faculty. DLTR membership includes elected officials, building leaders, and teachers. CICP membership includes higher education administrators, district and building leaders, and district data coordinators.

¹¹ Membership on the Illinois Bilingual Advisory Council is determined on the basis of experience in or knowledge of the various programs in bilingual education. Current membership includes district leaders, Regional Office of Education staff, district bilingual directors and coordinators, and individuals from policy groups.

Timeline: This work will commence in early 2019. Recommendations will be provided to ISBE no later than September 2019.

Recommendation V

11. ISBE will continue to require a test of basic skills for the issuance of a license for those individuals who have not completed a bachelor's degree yet. The ACT or SAT will be used as the test(s) of basic skills a candidate may use. The TAP will be discontinued on June 30, 2019. Prior to June 30, 2019, teacher candidates may continue to complete the TAP test or complete either the SAT or ACT.

As identified in the Teach Illinois report, examining the relationship between performance on a test of basic skills and the effectiveness of pre-service and in-service teachers will provide ISBE insight into both the appropriate instrument(s) for this work as well as the content of the exam. To be sure, ACT and SAT scores are two means of doing this. In addition, some stakeholders suggested another way of considering basic skills is through the student submission of a portfolio. Indeed, in addition to math, reading, and writing, a portfolio approach can also include other experiences or work that can be understood as "basic skills" (e.g., demonstrated experience/evidence of engaging students, work-based learning experiences, and participation in co-curricular activities, among others).

Timeline: ISBE will convene a group of practicing teachers, administrators, higher education faculty, and others no later than January 2019 to identify the appropriate content for a portfolio assessment of basic skills. Recommendations will be shared with ISBE no later than June 30, 2019.

12. ISBE will develop an application requesting the expertise of faculty from higher education and school districts with expertise in research design in order to develop and refine the appropriate methodology for studying the relationship between a test of basic skills and pre-service and in-service teaching effectiveness.

Timeline: The application and identification of individuals will be completed no later than June 30, 2019. The appropriate research questions and methodology will be identified during summer and fall 2019. Data collection will begin in 2020 and conclude in spring 2022. Data analysis will begin in early 2021. Recommendations will be shared with ISBE in fall 2022.

Recommendation VI

13. As part of the ESSA State Plan for Illinois, ISBE identified a competitive grant that provides modest grants for school districts to propose and implement Teacher Leader projects. Information about teacher leadership that is gleaned from these projects will be shared via peer-to-peer learning.

Timeline: The Teacher Leader grant will be released by December 1, 2018. The intent is for planning work to occur in spring 2019 and for study to occur during the 2019-20 school year.

Recommendation VII

14. ISBE will continue to advocate for funding for teacher mentoring; to modify administrative rule, as applicable; and to convene regional peer-to-peer learning opportunities for districts via IL-EMPOWER in order to share best practices in induction and mentoring.

Timeline: Regional peer to peer meetings will begin in the spring 2019 and occur no less than twice each year.

15. ISBE will work with practicing teachers, building and district administrators, and others to identify and develop quality standards and research based guidance. These activities are aligned with the reintroduction of the new Teacher Induction and Mentoring statute.

Timeline: The development of quality standards and research based guidance will commence in January 2019. This work will be completed by December 2019.

Background Information

ISBE launched Teach Illinois: Strong Teachers, Strong Classrooms in September 2017 to better understand staffing challenges and craft a holistic set of policy solutions to address them. The yearlong effort aimed to build on the work already underway across Illinois.

Teach Illinois, a partnership between ISBE and the Joyce Foundation, began with a “year of study,” which gave State Board officials a chance to conduct more than 40 focus group sessions and hear from more than 400 teachers, parents, students, principals, superintendents, college of education deans, and other partners. ISBE staff heard about challenges, such as the dilemmas rural and high-poverty urban districts face in recruiting teachers and, in particular, shortage areas such as English as a second language (ESL)/bilingual. ISBE officials also heard about promising practices and thoughtful policy ideas regarding licensure, teacher preparation, leadership, and teacher diversity.

The following recommendations were identified as a result of this work and shared with the Board at its annual retreat on September 11-12, 2018:

- I. Coordinate a statewide campaign to elevate the teaching profession and inspire people, especially those of color, to join the profession.
- II. Incentivize and create opportunities for P-12 and postsecondary institutions to work together to create streamlined rigorous pathways into the teaching profession.
- III. Support partnerships between school districts and teacher preparation programs in order to closely align teacher supply and demand.
- IV. Develop innovative, results-based approaches to educator preparation.
- V. Develop and adopt a research-based bar for licensure that leads to a highly effective and diverse workforce.
- VI. Promote teacher leadership and career pathways with differentiated responsibilities and appropriate incentives.
- VII. Develop robust teacher mentorship and induction programs.

Libi Gil and Jason Helfer summarized the process of the year of inquiry at the September 2018 retreat and shared specific recommendations with the Board. Board members shared thoughts on each recommendation after it was presented. Issues within the recommendations that were noted by Board members include:

- The collective impact of inadequate and inequitable funding and the necessity for fully funding the Evidence-Based Funding (EBF) formula,
- Instability of the state budget (e.g., approved only for a single year at a time and at the end of the school year),
- Lack of opportunity to experience teaching at the high school level,
- School and classroom climate including social and emotional learning,
- Field experiences while in educator preparation,
- Testing required of educators who wish to become licensed teachers, teacher leadership, and
- The importance of mentoring for teachers.

Staff informed Board members at the conclusion of the presentation that the report was posted on the [Teach Illinois website](#) and that public comment would be accepted through October 2, 2018.

Public Comment

ISBE received more than 150 public comments on the report. The majority of the submissions provided insight into multiple recommendations. In some instances, a commenter would suggest how, generally, a recommendation could be coordinated with other recommendations.

Recommendation I: Coordinate a statewide campaign to elevate the teaching profession and inspire people, especially those of color, to join the profession.

Thirty-one individuals submitted comments in favor of a statewide campaign to elevate the teaching profession. A majority of commenters, although in agreement with the recommendation, believe that the success of this approach and the entirety of the Teach Illinois project will be limited until such a time that Illinois reforms its pension system, adequately funds its schools, reduces mandates, refines the teacher evaluation system, improves working conditions for teachers, and increases teacher pay.

Others connected the success of this recommendation to other recommendations, such as teacher preparation, licensure requirements, and teacher leadership. Still others, while believing the campaign is the correct action, believe it must, in addition to celebrating the good work that occurs in schools, also acknowledge the systemic barriers that limit the access of individuals who wish to enter the teaching profession (e.g., testing requirements, cost of testing, low pay, working conditions). Others also indicated that a campaign to elevate the profession must re-establish respect of the profession and do so in a way that also inspires individuals of color to enter into the profession. The campaign should teach the broad public, including community leaders, politicians, and employers, about the valuable impact that teachers have on the lives of children.

Recommendation II: Incentivize and create opportunities for P-12 and postsecondary institutions to work together to create streamlined pathways into the teaching profession.

Twenty-one individuals submitted comments regarding Recommendation II. A few commenters asked for additional clarity in what is meant by “streamlined pathways” and “dual credit pathways.” Some requested that these pathways be developed cooperatively with practicing teachers to provide rich, rigorous, and relevant experiences for future teacher candidates. Others suggested that dual credit be offered for a pathway in high school that leads to licensure at the postsecondary level and that the Illinois Articulation Initiative between two- and four-year colleges should be aligned in such a way as to assist students in identifying and completing pathways.

Some commenters suggested that a distinct education pathway be included within the Health and Public Service Career Cluster as well as identified examples of possible dual credit courses as part of the pathway. Other commenters stated that it could be helpful to utilize Regional Offices of Education (ROEs) or Intermediate Service Centers (ISCs) in order to identify local needs. Still others suggested that one critical area for partnerships is to ensure that candidates are afforded multiple and extended opportunities in a variety of school sites.

Recommendation III: Support partnerships between school districts and teacher preparation programs in order to closely align teacher supply and demand.

Twenty-one comments were received regarding Recommendation III. All commenters agreed with the importance of school district/higher education partnerships. However, some commenters suggested that the work of these partnerships focus first on preparing candidates in content and pedagogy and less on supply and demand. One commenter asked about the logistics of the partnership grants identified in the report (e.g., who is responsible for the administration of the grant -- districts or higher education?) as well as the importance of ensuring clarity of roles and responsibilities. Other respondents suggested that the partnerships should focus in high-needs endorsement areas (e.g., special education, ESL/bilingual) or geographic regions (e.g., rural schools, low-performing schools)

and include community members or/and organizations in the partnership work.¹² Related to the aforementioned, some commenters suggested the importance of creating district/high education partnerships based upon local district need as well as identifying and making available data to determine partnership needs.

A few commenters recognized the Partnership in Educator Preparation (PEP) work and its importance in understanding district need. A few commenters, however, contested the accuracy or lack of inclusion of data in specific endorsement areas (e.g., ESL/bilingual and early childhood education [ECE]). Some commenters also suggested that ISBE not use outcome data outside the control of the preparation programs when considering preparation program efficacy (e.g., retention rate, job placement, or test scores). Others stated that preparation programs should provide data to candidates on current supply and demand as individuals determine which grade span or content they may wish to teach. Finally, commenters suggested that one way of assisting with the partnership between districts and higher education -- and recruitment, in general -- is to allow compensation for candidates during student teaching.¹³

Recommendation IV: Develop innovative, results-based approaches to educator preparation.

Fifty individuals provided comments on Recommendation IV. Some commenters asked for clarity regarding what is meant by “innovative” and “results-based” approaches to educator preparation. Many supported the idea of increasing the avenues of entry into teaching but requested that ISBE work with practicing teachers, administrators, higher education faculty, and other stakeholders to determine the criteria and competencies necessary in an innovative program and that these programs also include induction and mentoring supports for newly licensed teachers. Some suggested that program approaches are tied to district need/high-needs areas (e.g., ESL/bilingual,¹⁴ ECE).¹⁵

Also, many commenters identified where this work should occur (e.g., including, but not limited to, higher education and community-based sites) as well as the types of experiences a candidate should undergo while in a preparation program. In contrast, others believe that only four-year institutions of higher education should offer teacher preparation programs. So, too, some commenters believed that including P-12 student outcomes as part of a suite of measures for preparation program accountability is a poor idea as preparation programs do not possess oversight of their candidates once they matriculate, cannot control the length of time a teacher is in the field or whether she or he was mentored, and the like.

Those commenters who supported the idea of increasing the avenues of entry into the field also believe that by doing so, Illinois will be in a better position to recruit diverse candidates into the field. Doing this,

¹² In particular, the recent enactment of Public Act 100-822 provides individuals who hold a bachelor's degree and who work in community-based early childhood education settings the opportunity to obtain a Professional Educator License.

¹³ Currently, Illinois Administrative Code 25.620 allows candidates to receive credit and compensation as a teacher during student teaching if the candidate is student teaching:

- In a charter school or nonpublic school, recognized or seeking recognition via ISBE, or
- Participating in a Grow Your Own program, or
- Has at least one year of experience in a school or community-based early childhood setting and did student teaching at the same site where the experience was gathered, or
- Holds an Educator License with Stipulations endorsed for Transitional Bilingual Educator, Career and Technical Education (CTE) Educator, or Provisional CTE Educator and works in a school district, or
- Holds a substitute teacher license and is employed by Chicago Public Schools.

¹⁴ Commenters also contested the data in the Teach Illinois report regarding the number of English Learners (ELs) in Illinois schools. SIS data indicates that 10.7 percent of K-12 students were identified as ELs in 2017-18. The accuracy of data is paramount as it suggests an even greater need for educators to receive training and/or endorsement in ESL/bilingual in order to serve ELs. ISBE will update this in the Teach Illinois report.

¹⁵ PA 100-645 allows teachers working in community-based ECE classrooms to receive licensure through an institution of higher education with an approved program while being mentored by a licensed teacher.

in turn, could assist with Recommendation I. More specifically, a few commentators suggested by funding programs, such as “Troops for Teachers” and “Grow Your Own”; implementing programs, such as Educators Rising; or supporting the implementation of Supporting Future Teachers Program¹⁶ could result in additional individuals entering into the field.

One commenter suggested that one way of moving toward a results-based program is by requiring a yearlong student teaching experience. Another suggested that a common pathway for first-year teachers be standardized statewide and to anticipate the learning trajectory needed for specific content areas so it may be part of preparation and professional learning once one is licensed. Others suggested that considering the needs of career changers is important when contemplating the logistics of how one becomes a teacher (e.g., counting previous professional experience or creating a means to receive licensure or an additional endorsement without needing to return to school). Still others requested that ISBE waive the subject matter requirements (e.g., credit hour) for subsequent endorsement requirements and in high-needs areas. One commenter also stated that only those teachers who receive a proficient or exemplary on a teacher evaluation should be afforded the opportunity for waiving subsequent endorsement requirements.¹⁷

In contrast, a few commenters stated that not all shortage areas should be dealt with through “streamlining” or reduction in coursework (e.g., deaf and hard of hearing).¹⁸ So, too, some questioned why ISBE does not recognize other nationally recognized approaches to educator preparation via a Professional Educator License (e.g., Montessori). A few other commentators, some of whom support the idea of multiple avenues of entry, think that ensuring that the program(s) are of high quality and held to the same standards, regardless of delivery model, is paramount. Some commenters asked if “innovative” and “results-based” approaches to preparation would be mandatory or optional for institutions of higher education and if these approaches would meet the requirements for national accreditation that some Illinois institutions with educator preparation programs may undergo.

Recommendation V: Develop and adopt a research-based bar for licensure that leads to a highly effective and diverse workforce.

Recommendation V received 79 comments. The majority of commenters either requested removal of a requirement for a test of basic skills in order to receive licensure or that ISBE should consider other approaches to this assessment.¹⁹ A few individuals supported the continued use of a test of basic skills. Five other commenters exhorted ISBE not to “dumb down” or “make becoming a teacher easier.” A few commenters stated that basic skills are more than the content of any one test and that preparation include experiences that introduce candidates to the requirements of Performance Evaluation Reform Act via experienced teachers. Numerous commenters shared their personal struggles with successful completion of the test of basic skills requirement.

A number of commenters suggested that the Test of Academic Proficiency (TAP), in particular, should not be used as a test of basic skills. A few also identified the ACT and SAT as inappropriate, whereas others suggested modifying the cut score of the TAP or exempting candidates with a particular GPA.

¹⁶ PA 100-0982, which spells out the Supporting Future Teachers Program, allows teacher candidates who meet certain requirements to work under the supervision of a district employee while enrolled at least part time in a preparation program.

¹⁷ Related to comments about the modification of requirements for the receipt of a subsequent endorsement: Two commenters focused in particular on ESL and bilingual endorsements. These endorsements are a bit different than other endorsements. ESL and bilingual endorsements are subsequent endorsements. One may not earn an initial endorsement in ESL or bilingual teaching on a Professional Educator License.

¹⁸ It is important to note that “results-based” and “innovative” programming does not necessarily mean that a preparation program is necessarily streamlined. An approach that emphasizes competency, for instance, may take more or less time than completing a course, depending upon the candidate.

¹⁹ One commenter suggested that an individual should not need to pass any test or hold a bachelor’s degree for the receipt of a teaching license.

Others believe that a test of basic skills is important and should take place through portfolios or other methods.

One commenter, a career changer, noted her difficulty in passing the TAP and offered that depending upon how ISBE "...chooses to adapt, change, and evolve the path to becoming a teacher" may impact how the field of teaching is viewed by those who may consider becoming a teacher. A few commenters already possessing professional licenses in other professions (e.g., nurses, social workers, psychologists) questioned the need for a test of basic skills for those who wish to become school service personnel and already possess a bachelor's degree (e.g., school nurse, school social worker, school psychologist). More generally, some commenters suggested that individuals who hold a bachelor's degree should be exempt from the test of basic skills requirement. Additionally, a few commenters suggested that a test of basic skills would be waived if the GPA of a candidate is over 2.75/4.00 in college coursework.

Commenters also acknowledged the disproportionate pass rates on the TAP and its impact of building a diverse teacher pipeline. One commenter also encouraged ISBE to consider the racial disparity in passage of the edTPA. Some provided research suggesting the weak link between licensure exams and effectiveness. Finally, some commenters questioned the content of the TAP and its relationship to what the individual commenter is or wishes to teach.

Recommendation VI: Promote teacher leadership and career pathways with differentiated responsibilities and appropriate incentives.

Seventeen individuals submitted comments on Recommendation VI. Some commentators were critical of the lack of historical context provided in the Teach Illinois report regarding previous mentoring and induction initiatives at the state level. This lack of context, commenters suggested, could too easily lead to the repeating of past mistakes, which Illinois cannot afford to do.

One commenter suggested that one way of promoting teacher leadership will require that the state consider how to reach experienced teachers in rural areas who may not be able to access the same opportunities for growth and leadership as those teachers in other parts of the state. Related to this, other commenters suggested that the General Assembly identify sustainable funding streams to support teacher leadership. At the same time, some commenters acknowledged that teacher leadership opportunities may be limited by how building and district administration understand the work and, on account of this, the opportunities that are provided for its expression. Also, some, while supporting teacher leadership, are concerned that it will be viewed as just another responsibility for an already overburdened teacher. Commenters went on to suggest that for teacher leadership to succeed in school sites, working conditions within the school must be improved. A few commenters identified National Board Teacher Certification and required professional development/learning as a way of promoting teacher leadership. One commenter asked that ISBE re-evaluate its choice to move away from tiered licensure.²⁰

Other comments suggested that the grant program identified in the Teach Illinois report should require that districts partner with ROEs/ISCs and/or institutes of higher education. Some commenters requested that through the grant opportunity in the Teach Illinois report, ISBE work with teachers to study the validity of the teacher leader pathway. A few commenters cautioned ISBE that the teacher leader endorsement, if earned through competency, should align with other credentials and professional learning recognized by higher education. So, too, a few stated that since the teacher leader endorsement requires one be introduced to a specific set of ideas and skills, a teacher leader endorsement should not be earned through competency but through a program of study.

Another suggested the roles in which a teacher leader could serve and requested ISBE identify these roles for purposes of assignability (e.g., cooperating teacher, mentoring new teachers, and contributing

²⁰ A tiered licensure system differentiates licensure based upon the level of experience (e.g., novice teacher and experienced teacher) or type of experience that a teacher possesses (e.g., National Board Teacher Certification).

to induction programs). Finally, a commenter suggested that considering teacher leadership is important both unto itself (e.g., what is the role and work of a teacher leader?) as well as its potential impact on a diverse teaching corps (as a teacher that is provided space to learn and grow will be more likely to stay in the profession).

S

Recommendation VII: Develop robust teacher mentorship and induction programs.

Twenty-three individuals submitted comments on Recommendation VII. One commenter suggested that ISBE identify staff that can work with high-needs school districts in developing and implementing mentoring programs. A few commenters believe that principal mentoring is as important as teacher mentoring and that to exclude the former could exacerbate challenges in retention for both teachers and principals.

Some commenters stated that in order for mentoring opportunities to flourish in Illinois, districts must be adequately funded. This, in turn, could ensure every classroom has a highly qualified teacher. Others are concerned that the current working conditions in schools (e.g., new initiatives without proper training, mandated curriculum, and testing) make it challenging to understand how mentors will be identified and continue serving in that role. A few commenters think that universities should mentor their graduates.²¹ Another asks, what is/could be the role of higher education in mentoring teachers? Other commenters are interested in studying mentoring practices to identify those that are “research based” and to use these as the basis for ISBE requirements for induction and mentoring programs.

Funding

The importance of continued advocacy for fully funding Illinois school districts is mentioned within Recommendations I and VI of the Teach Illinois report. Fifty-nine comments identified funding and/or compensation as an essential consideration, even though they did not always pertain to a specific recommendation. These comments focused in various ways upon fully funding EBF, compensation (e.g., a minimum teacher salary statewide),²² incentives (e.g., paying for the education of those that wish to teach, paying for required tests, scholarships, grants, loan forgiveness, housing allowances, and reforming the pension system), and working conditions.

Some commenters noted that until Illinois works through issues of compensation and adequate funding of Illinois schools, the recommendations in the Teach Illinois report, while both reasonable and admirable, are not likely to impact the teacher shortage. Some commenters suggested that ISBE engage with stakeholders to identify the compensation writ large necessary to alleviate the teacher shortage. Also, it was suggested that ISBE take the opportunity presented through EBF to request that the required district spending plan include how time is allocated to ensure that teachers have time to plan, deliver, and assess student work.

²¹ One commenter stated this should be for one year, whereas another suggested three-four years.

²² For instance, one commenter who provided no rationale suggested that the starting salary for a teacher with a bachelor’s degree is \$92,050.